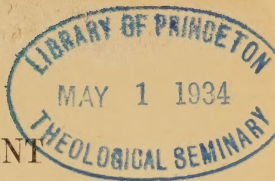


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The atonement and the at-one-
-maker



✓
THE ATONEMENT

AND

THE AT-ONE-MAKER.

BY ✓

JOHN HENRY BLUNT,

CURATE OF CORNWOOD, SOUTH DEVON.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—
1 *S. John* v. 4.

"JESUS the beginner and finisher of our faith."—*Heb.* xii. 2.

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“ There is but one Mediator, CHRIST, as saith S. Paul, 1 Tim. ii., and by that word understand an At-one-Maker, a peace-maker, and bringer into grace and favour, having full power so to do.”—
MATTHEW TYNDAL.

P R E F A C E.

It may be well to introduce the following pages to the general reader, by a few observations on the principles which they are intended to illustrate.

Christian persons who take to themselves the name of Protestant, have long been accustomed to use as a sort of distinctive formula by which true believers are to be tested, that "faith in the Atonement is the great principle of religion."

This is, no doubt, *in words*, correct; for since men are by nature aliens from God, and the end of all grace is to make God and man at one, therefore the atonement is the very essence of the Christian system. But, unfortunately, a much less comprehensive meaning is attached to the word Atonement by the great majority of those alluded to. This restricted and partial signification connects the word Atonement exclusively with that satisfaction of the Divine Justice which was effected by our blessed

LORD in His Death and Passion ; a meaning which it does not naturally bear, and which it was not intended to bear by those in whose writings it first appeared as a theological term,—the English divines of the sixteenth century ; but which crept into the loose and self-confident writings of the puritans, and probably arose out of the Antinomian teaching of their day.

In the English New Testament, the Atonement is once and once only mentioned by that name, and that is in Romans v. 11, where its meaning is identified in the margin with the word “reconciliation,” by which, in all other places, its Greek original is rendered. Its Scriptural use therefore, as applied to the work of our blessed LORD, is the same as that which belongs to it in old English writers—reconciliation wrought *between* those who were at variance—not expiation merely, wrought by one *for* another. An application of the word which makes it mean satisfaction for sin so imperfectly expresses the fulness of its meaning, that it manifestly amounts to a perversion of the real sense ; and, while it is much to be wished that inaccuracy in the common use of theological terms (from which, perhaps, more than from real diversity of opinion, so much heartburning arises among the multitude) were always better guarded against ; in this instance a peculiar evil has arisen, which makes such a perversion greatly to be

regretted.¹ For it has led many to dwell so exclusively upon the work accomplished by our blessed SAVIOUR in His Death upon the Cross, that they have seemed sometimes almost to have lost sight of that present work which He is still effecting, and ever will be, as our High Priest of the New Covenant. Considering the Atonement to be the sacrificial expiation wrought in our LORD'S Death, such persons have often said that the Creeds are wanting in the chief doctrine of Christianity, because this doctrine is not expressed in them. And when the necessity of sacraments and good works has been inculcated, such teaching has been declared to be inconsistent with the doctrine of the Atonement. But if the Atonement be, as it plainly is, the whole work by which we are made at one with God, all means of grace, such as sacraments, are manifestly part of it; and they who urge the use of them are so far from doing what they are said to do,—“setting the Prayer Book above the Bible, and the Church above CHRIST”—that they are labouring to teach the one great truth to which the whole Scriptures point; making CHRIST and His work the very centre and life of their system, the one only ground of our hope, the

¹ In a recent educational work by the Bishop of New Zealand is the following noteworthy passage,—“We should not now have so much controversy, if greater attention had been paid to strictness in the definition of words.”

power from which alone prayers and sacraments and holy living derive the slightest value that they possess.

It is to show the doctrine of the Atonement in this full and practical light that the following pages have been written: and they are sent forth, not without a hope that some may be led, even by them, to a more intelligent view of what is called the "Sacramental system," than that which identifies it with the corrupt parts of Romanist belief and practice.

It is only necessary to add that the writer has thought it best to take for the basis of his illustrations, that common ground of truth, the Apostles' Creed, on which all Catholic Christians stand; and that he has thrown them into the form of sermons, partly because a tone of exhortation is proper in such a form which would seem out of place in any other; and partly because the reader comes prepared to receive a more solemn impression from arguments so conveyed, than from the pages of a theological essay in a more ordinary form.

WHIT-MONDAY, 1855.

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I.

THE PERSON OF THE AT-ONE-MAKER.

S. JOHN XX. 31.

THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD ; AND THAT, BELIEVING, YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME.

ONCE there was no schism between GOD and man. Man was happy, wise, and good, and his Creator was also his Friend. Then the glory and beauty of the Image of GOD was reflected over the whole face of nature. There was joy and tranquillity in all the earth ; for when man was not disobedient towards GOD, the lower creation had not rebelled against his own will. And this might have lasted for ever, but there came a change. An evil one who had been cast out of heaven, sought to mar the beauty of earth, and to turn the harmony of the creation into discord. He wrought upon the will of man, and set it up in rivalry with the will of GOD, and then his work was accomplished. For the earth had been made in the likeness of Heaven, and the will

of GOD was to have been done as perfectly in the one as it is in the other. This was the relation of man to his Maker, and when this relation was broken by an act of disobedience, it was as if the key-stone of creation's arch had fallen, and all had gone to ruin. Though GOD would have been the friend of man, He could not go against the eternal necessity of His will, nor consent to a broken harmony of justice, therefore men became His enemies. GOD was no longer at one with man. Then came labour, pain, evil passions, sorrow, death into the world. The earth gave forth thorns and briars on account of man's sin, and in his heart there sprung up the weeds of a corrupted nature. Before long he begat sons in his fallen likeness, and then the full fruits of his fall began to be shown in violence, sin, and death. And so the whole creation groaned and travailed together, mourning for the lost unity of Eden, and the veiled presence of GOD.

Then arose pity in heaven. Angels had seen the woe which separated man from his GOD, and wept over it, but they had no power to remedy the evil. The Eternal SON beheld it, and in His love He resolved to become the At-one-maker by Whom the gulf between fallen earth and unfallen heaven should be bridged over, and the unity of GOD and man restored. He alone could reconcile the restoration with the necessity of the All-righteous Will; He

alone could have power to contend against the evil one who had established sin and misery in the world ; He alone, because His love was the love of God, His power the power of GOD. He was the Word and Wisdom of the FATHER. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was GOD."¹ This was He "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."² This was He Whom the LORD "possessed in the beginning of His way, before His works of old,"³ "by Whom also He made the worlds, Who" was "the brightness of His FATHER's glory, and the express Image of His Person."⁴ Language fails in uttering the mystery of His exalted Godhead, and men are forced to behold it in the shadows of His attributes, and by the analogy of earthly relations. "Canst thou by searching find out GOD?" Can reason form any definite image of One Who is the infinite abstraction of all that is good, noble, mighty, holy ; Whose person and power are alike without bounds ? Yet, whatever GOD is, that was the SON of GOD from the beginning ; equal to the FATHER in His Godhead, equal in glory and majesty, uncreate, incomprehensible, eternal, almighty, GOD and LORD.

Such was the original nature of the At-one-

¹ S. John i. 1.

² Mic. v. 2.

³ Prov. viii. 22.

⁴ Heb. i. 2, 3.

maker; but in such a nature He could not make GOD and man at one; for in Himself, as in the FATHER, dwelt the glory of that eternal Godhead Whose will, the only law of the world, man had set at nought. The nature of GOD and the original nature of man could indeed hold communion with each other, but when man sinned he put on a lower nature, one from which GOD was utterly alienated. His Maker had planted in him an inherent righteousness, and it was replaced by inherent sin; how then could that fallen nature have any fellowship with GOD? Therefore GOD the SON when the fulness of time had come for Him to begin His work of atonement, took into His original nature the nature of fallen man, and became "GOD manifest in the flesh," One Whose nature on the one hand could reach up to heaven, even to the throne of the Highest; on the other, stoop down to man, even the lowest abyss of the fall. On the one hand he could offer to the necessity of GOD's Will that satisfaction for sin which could only be offered by the infinite holiness of GOD; on the other He could effect that purification of the sinner's nature which could only take place by the working of GOD in and through that very nature itself. Inasmuch as He was GOD He could do that which man could not do for want of power; inasmuch as He was man He could offer that substitution and satis-

faction, through suffering which GOD could not offer, because suffering was impossible to a nature solely divine.

This then was the mystery of man's fall, that in the necessity of GOD's absolute will, he was alienated from GOD, and his nature was fallen from its high estate. And this was the mystery of his restoration, that under the same necessity he could be recovered from his fall by no act of his own, nor yet by any act of the power of GOD working by itself, but only by the power of the One being joined to the weakness of the other. So that the fundamental principle of the Atonement is UNION of substance. Though GOD the FATHER and GOD the SON are Almighty in will, it was not through a mere exercise of divine will that the reconciliation of mankind was effected; but the substance of man which had lost its holiness was brought into union with the substance of the all-holy GOD. On that conjunction the whole fabric of redemption was built up, and as the superstructure of a building follows the plan of the foundation, so the work of atonement from first to last takes its form from this first principle, enunciated in the person of the At-one-maker.

Now let us see more in detail how these necessities of the will of GOD are met by and in the Person of JESUS CHRIST our LORD, of Whom we

declare in the Confession of our Faith that He is the SON of GOD, that He came down from heaven, that He was Incarnate by the HOLY GHOST of the Virgin Mary, and became Man.

1. HE is the SON of GOD. And are not the Holy Angels who celebrated the work of Creation with joyous praises, "Sons of GOD?"¹ Are not all who bear the name of man sons of Him Who made them? Are not they sons whom GOD hath chosen for the inheritance of heaven hereafter? Yet is the LORD JESUS called the "only" and "only-begotten SON of GOD," as well in the book of truth as in the words of the Catholic creeds; for His Sonship is not as of angels and men a Sonship through creation; nor yet as of Christian men, a Sonship through adoption, but a Sonship through eternal generation by which He is GOD of GOD, the SON from eternity of the eternal FATHER. We cannot understand this mystery, yet there is no room for doubting it. For not only was He Whom we thus name born in a miraculous manner into our nature, and therefore born of GOD in an extraordinary sense, as the angel had said: "That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the SON of GOD;" not only had the FATHER declared of Him beforehand, "I will be His FATHER, and He shall be My SON" "I will make Him My First-born, higher than the kings of

¹ Job xxxviii. 7.

the earth :” and after His human form had appeared on earth, “This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased.” Not only was He thus known to be the SON of GOD in time, but also to be the WORD Which was “in the beginning with GOD ;” Who had His glory with the FATHER, “before the world was ;”¹ Who “is before all things, and by Whom all things consist.”² And thus is He declared to be One, begotten indeed of the FATHER, yet existing with the FATHER from the beginning, so that there never was a time when He was not. In what manner that eternal Sonship was wrought is not revealed to us ; and seeing we could know the things of eternity only by revelation of the Eternal, we must be content to remain ignorant where He has not given us knowledge, believing that which He has told us because it is His Word.

2. And this being the relation of the At-one-Maker’s Godhead to the FATHER, there is beside, His relation to ourselves, He is “our LORD.” This holy Name is of the highest significance, expressing the most exalted Being and Authority that can be possessed and exercised. It may be observed in the Old Testament that the Church treats this word with an especial reverence, writing it in capital letters ; and the reason is because LORD is the Christian form of the Holy Name by which GOD has revealed Him-

¹ S. John xvii. 5.

² Coloss. i. 17.

self to men. He Whom we thus name is therefore named "JEHOVAH;" the "perfect GOD;" the "LORD over the whole earth;" the "LORD of Lords." He claims from us all reverence, fear, obedience, and love, as being Head over all, the supreme Ruler of angels and men; than Whom there is none more exalted in earth or heaven.

The Church beheld in the perspective of ages the glory of the At-one-Maker's GODHEAD. "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel,"¹ "GOD with us."² "Thus saith the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD of Hosts; I am the First, and I am the Last, and beside Me there is no GOD."³ "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given and His Name shall be called the mighty GOD."⁴ And what prophets foretold, that Evangelists and Apostles sealed by records of His acts, and further revelation of His glory. Who but GOD could restore sight to one *born* blind? Who but GOD could heal the sick at a distance by the invisible operation of His Will alone? Who but GOD could raise the dead from the bier, and out of the corrupting grave? Yet all this did our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and in doing "manifested forth His glory" even the glory which He had with the FATHER before

¹ Isa. vii. 14.

² S. Matt. i. 23.

³ Isa. xlv. 6.

⁴ Isa. ix. 6.

the world was. He was indeed "GOD manifest in the flesh;"¹ and His teaching was the "doctrine of GOD our SAVIOUR;"² for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily,"³ and He is LORD over all, "GOD blessed for ever."⁴ In this may we "perceive the love of GOD, because He laid down His life for us."⁵ "We may not deny Him, lest we be under the curse of an Antichrist, and cast out from heaven, for "This is the true GOD, and eternal life;"⁶ "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."⁷

In JESUS therefore, the Man and SAVIOUR; in CHRIST, the Anointed Prophet, the Anointed Priest, and the Anointed King; we behold the Person of Him, Who dwelling with GOD the FATHER in the eternal glory and majesty of heaven, came down to earth and took our nature upon Him, that He might bind up the wounds which sin had made; that He might release creation from bondage; that He might restore the lost harmony of the universe; that He might make man AT-ONE with GOD. Even when He was in the form of a servant, He was the Word and Wisdom of GOD; and so perfect was the union of His two natures one with the other, that the Apostle dares to say of His blood shed upon the Cross, it was the blood of GOD.⁸

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 16.² Titus ii. 10.³ Coloss. ii. 9.⁴ Rom. ix. 5.⁵ 1 S. John iii. 16.⁶ 1 S. John v. 20.⁷ Rev. xix. 16.⁸ Acts xx. 28.

Is there then any excuse for those who say that this high mystery of the At-one-Maker's two-fold nature need not be made a matter of distinct Faith? that it is little consequence whether men believe it or not, so that they lead good lives? How dare we say that is not an essential article of Faith which God has set before us as the very basis of all our salvation? Has He not taught us this truth by the mouths of His Prophets in elder days, and His Apostles in later time? Did He not cause one of the Holy Gospels, at least, to be written for this very end, to teach us the Godhead of the Man CHRIST JESUS?¹ Has He not warned us of the fearful doom that awaits Antichrist, the denier of this doctrine? Who then are we to set at nought the words of God?

Suppose even that there were no such thing as an absolute necessity in the will of God, yet He has revealed to us that no creature could save another, or reconcile himself to God. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else."² "I am the LORD, and beside Me there is no SAVIOUR."³ Moreover does not the whole tenour of that record which is the written guide to salvation, show us that life is only through the Name of our LORD and GOD, JESUS CHRIST, the SON of the FATHER, Who became man for our sake? It is written in ineffaceable letters of

¹ S. John xx. 31.² Isa. xlv. 22.³ Isa. xliii. 11.

light that there is none other name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved, but only the Name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.¹ He it is Who was GOD before the world began; He it is Who when He came to make peace by the blood of His Cross was yet GOD,—for GOD cannot cease to be; He it is Who ascended to heaven with that Body which could see no corruption; He it is Who now sits at the FATHER's right hand still working out the salvation of sinners.

Wisely therefore does the Church,—and doubtless by the good guidance of Him Who inspired holy men of old—make this the very key-stone of all her teaching and practice. When she offers up her prayers, it is in His name “Who” we declare “ever liveth with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, one GOD.” When day by day, and even hour by hour, circling the globe with her praises as with a zone of light, she sings the doxology that saints have sung eighteen hundred years without ceasing, she makes constant confession that the SON is of equal Godhead with the FATHER. In the Litany, nearly all her supplications are made to GOD the SON, Redeemer of the world. In her thanksgiving and praise at the Holy Eucharist she worships and praises Him, “LORD GOD, LAMB of GOD, SON of the FATHER,” by Whom all her precious gifts are received. Thus does she

¹ Acts iv. 12.

witness to us that every act of the Atonement is dependent on the two-fold nature of Him Who makes the divided at one again. Thus does she bid us "look on Him," JEHOVAH¹ and CHRIST, "Whom they have pierced." Thus does she teach us that the Crucified One was "the LORD of glory;"² that there is no redemption save through the "LORD that bought"³ us; no salvation but by the "blood of God"⁴ shed upon the Cross. By the light of this truth, as by the sun shining in a dark place, all other truths of the evangelic mystery are brought out in strong outline: it transfigures the history of CHRIST Himself, and furnishes the key to His example and precepts; it vivifies all our faith and practice; it gives substance to our worship; it teaches us the dignity of our redeemed nature; it sets before us, finally, the glory that yet awaits the redeemed in the restored unity of God and man.

¹ Compare Zech. xii. 10 with S. John xix. 37.

² 1 Cor. ii. 8. ³ 2 S. Peter ii. 1. ⁴ Acts xx. 28.

II.

THE BLOOD OF THE ATONEMENT.

1 S. JOHN i. 7.

. . . . THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST, HIS SON, CLEANSETH
US FROM ALL SIN.

THE nature of sin is twofold. There is the sin which belongs to every person who is born into the world, from which our SAVIOUR CHRIST alone was free: and there is the sin of which not all persons born into the world are guilty. The first is named original, or birth sin, as being that which belongs to us through our origin from Adam, and our birth into his family. The second is named actual, or wilful sin, as being sin of our own act, for which our own wills are answerable.

Original sin is a great mystery; but GOD has given us some light respecting it in the Book of Revelation, by which let us be guided in our researches respecting both the disease and its remedy.

“By one man,” says S. Paul, “sin entered into the world!”¹ That is to say, there was no sin in the world before the sin of Adam; and his disobedience

¹ Rom. v. 12.

was the gate by which all other sin found entrance. And then the Apostle goes on to say that death, which we all experience, is the consequence of that one sin of one man ; “that death passed upon all men,” not only upon Adam. This seems plain and easy to understand. The sin of Adam changed his nature to such an extent that he, who before his disobedience was immortal, became afterwards subject to death. And because his immediate posterity, and all who descended from him, were and are born in his likeness, with the same nature that he had after his fall, therefore all are subject to death as he was—“In Adam all die.” But the Apostle adds to his words, “death passed upon all men, for that *all* have sinned ;” and since there are many born in the likeness of Adam who are taken out of the world before they have power or will of themselves to commit sin, it necessarily follows that “all have sinned,” that is, all are sinners, in some other way than by actual sin. The death, therefore, to which every person born into the world is subject, is the punishment of sin which clings to them by reason of their derivation from Adam ; and it is a death of the soul as well as of the body. For though we cannot understand perfectly the mystery of God’s Will, in the necessity of which, one man is made the sufferer by another man’s sin ; yet we may discern from the analogy of man’s bodily and spiritual nature, that

it is likely a permanent and hereditary change would be wrought in the latter, as well as in the former.

For instance, death of the body was not the consequence of something added to the body, but of something taken away. It was not that its nature received a new principle from which sprung decay, death, corruption ; but that a principle formerly inherent in the body being taken away, these followed the privation. *Death*, with all its train of weakness and disease, was the *loss of life*. Nor was that principle of life restored to his descendants, of which Adam himself had been deprived.

Now that which happened to the body seems also to have happened to the soul : a spiritual death—the privation of spiritual life—followed on the entrance of sin into the world. As soon as he had sinned, God punished man by the withdrawal of that inborn holiness which was to his soul what unceasing life was to his body. And because all who come from him inherit the nature of his soul as well as that of his body, they inherit a nature deprived of any inborn holiness,—of the principle of spiritual life. So that what we call original *sin*, as if it were something added to our spiritual nature through the first man's transgression, and afterwards imputed to us ; may be better understood as a natural privation of holiness, (or of the principle of holiness implanted in us,) analogous to the privation of the principle

of life, by which the body has become subject to decay and death.¹

This seems to do away with the short-sighted notion of some respecting the Church's doctrine of original sin ; as if it represented God to be capable of injustice,—punishing the children for the sins of the father. For as it is plain that the death of the body is a natural result of impurity engendered by sin, the privation of that eternal life which could only co-exist with a sinless nature ; so also is it plain that the penalty of sin under which we are all born is a natural consequence of the privation of an innate principle of holiness with which man was at first created, but which he lost in the fall.

Now, when it is said that “the blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth from all sin,” we must understand its efficacy to extend to original sin as well as actual. And the general work of the Atonement being to restore us to God's favour, this particular part thereof consists in filling up that fault or defect of our nature by which even at our birth we are alienated from Him : in restoring *supernaturally* “that thing which by nature we cannot have.”

¹ The Ninth Article of Religion defines original sin thus ; declaring it to be the “fault and corruption [vitium et depravatio] of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam.” The word “fault” is used in its older sense of “defect,” a break in the integrity and completeness of that in which it occurs.

Thus, at the entrance of life the blood of CHRIST is brought to bear upon us ; giving to every one a new element in his spiritual nature, by which he is restored to communion with GOD. Yet even after this new element is introduced, and after the sinner has been reconciled to his GOD, there arises other sin which can be cleansed away only by the same healing blood. Its cleansing power therefore is exercised either to *prevent* the commission of sin, or after it has been committed, to *bring about the pardon* of sin. By restoring to our nature the capacity for holiness, it places within us a power of resistance against sin, and especially against that enemy of GOD and man by whom all sin comes ; and thus in the cleansing of our original sin, purity becomes strength. And if, as is almost universally the case, in the face of our regeneration we sin against GOD, then again it is the Blood of JESUS CHRIST alone through which the sin of the penitent receives pardon.

So that the Blood of CHRIST is that, coming from *without* ourselves, whereby the defect of our original nature is done away, and men restored to that state of holiness in which they may hold communion with GOD. And because there yet remains within us the corruption, though not the guilt of the “old man,” the Blood of CHRIST is that whereby we have grace to resist it : whereby again we receive pardon for

sins committed. And this being so, whatever sinner shall reach Heaven, it will be because he has been cleansed by the all-sufficient Blood of CHRIST, and made for ever at one with God.

Now all this being a present and continual work, the power or virtue by which it is wrought must be one ever existing; and ever so existing as to be capable of present application to its exalted purpose. Therefore, by the Blood of CHRIST is symbolized to us the whole mystery of the Atonement which the SON of GOD wrought in His Human Nature; and which He is still working in the same Human Nature at the right hand of the Majesty on High. The "blood is the life" of the body, therefore it especially represents to us the Body and Manhood of Him Who, though He was GOD, yet became Man for our sakes. It is the virtue of the Incarnation; all powerful to work out that for which He became Man, because in the inseparable unity of His twofold nature, it is even the Blood of GOD—the Blood of that Man Who is GOD Immortal, Invisible, Eternal, Almighty, and Omnipresent.

Therefore the cleansing of men from *all* sin, is the proper office of our LORD JESUS CHRIST'S Human Body. That holy Body began its work in the past sufferings which it underwent upon earth. It continues the same work in the efficacy of its present application to all who are brought within the

range of its healing power. It was once offered up, a "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world." It is often bestowed now, that every individual sinner may be saved by the cleansing of his individual soul. It is that holy Body which restores out of its fulness what was lost through original sin: it is that which *now* restores by its present work in the nature of every sinner. It is that by which we draw nigh to God, and God draws nigh to us.

Let us see this more clearly still, by a consideration of our Blessed LORD as the One Mediator between GOD and man, the Man CHRIST JESUS. A mediator is one who interposes between two others, that he may unite or draw them together. Thus, CHRIST interposes between two who have naturally nothing in common; the One a Being of absolute holiness and perfection, the other naturally without holiness, and often full of sin. As GOD alone, then, CHRIST is not a Mediator; for though He could thus be united to the FATHER, He could have nothing in common with man. He therefore took upon Him the Nature of man in body and soul, that He might establish a common relation between Himself and man on the one hand, such as He had naturally with the FATHER on the other. And thus has He become the chain of communication between GOD in heaven and man on earth, the One Mediator;

and it is upon the ladder of His Human Nature that the angels of God ascend and descend,¹ ministering His gifts to mortal men,² and carrying their souls to the place of undying rest. Now, if this mediation is to be of any benefit to us, it is plain that beyond its universal application in the free offering made of it to all mankind, there must be also an individual application of it, by which it may mediate between God on the one hand, and each one of our souls by itself on the other. There must, therefore, be a personal union of every man with the At-one-Maker, for him to gain the benefit of the Atonement. And as it is only through Him that men can approach God now, or dwell with Him hereafter, all the work of our religion consists in drawing closer those bonds by which we are united to Him Who is Himself One with God. In this we see the solution of that mysterious language in which our Blessed Lord ever speaks of His relation to us. Whatever privilege we are to receive, is in some way associated with the idea of personal union. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." "I am the Door, by Me, if any man shall enter in." Our best hopes centre in Him. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "I am the Resurrection and the Life." "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Let none then say that this is not a truth of

¹ S. John i. 51.

² Heb. i. 14.

practical importance. For if in the twofold nature of the At-one-Maker we behold the only way by which sinners can be made holy, united to God, and drawn up to heaven ; if only by this channel does the Giver of all good gifts pour down upon us the grace by which eternal life is to be attained : if, again, we can avail ourselves of this Atonement only by personal union with the manhood of the SON of GOD, surely the great practical work of our probationary state is to establish and strengthen that all-important union by every means in our power. What *are* our practical necessities ? Do we not require at our very entrance into the world to be cleansed from the original sin which corrupts our nature, and divides us from GOD ? Then is the Blood of CHRIST set before us in the Baptism of Water and the HOLY SPIRIT, whereby we are united to the Incarnate SON of GOD, “baptized into one body,” “which is CHRIST.” And if in after life we fall under the temptation of the world, the flesh, and the devil, then by continual renewal of that union we are made partakers of CHRIST’S holiness and strength ; and, lifted up again from the dust by the power of Him Who gives Himself to dwell within us.

Other way to salvation than through Him in His Mediation we know not. He has opened to us, in His holy Body a fountain of grace for the cleansing away of all sin. He has placed it in the broad

daylight of His Church. All men may, if they will, drink of Living Water, and eat of the Bread of Heaven. Let this then be our endeavour, to seek after union with God Incarnate that we may by Him be lifted up from the place of the Fall to the place from whence He stooped down to us ; that the “ old man ” in Adam may be changed into the “ new creature ” in CHRIST : that He, by His blessed Manhood, may “ dwell in us, and we in Him ; ” that by Him we may be for ever reconciled, sanctified, and exalted.

III.

THE AT-ONE-MAKER THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

S. JOHN xiv. 6.

JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH,
AND THE LIFE: NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT
BY ME.

Two questions have been asked by those by whom the Christian scheme is not received in practical simplicity. The first question is this—"How does it happen that none can come to God by themselves?" the second—"How is it that men can come to Him by CHRIST?" The answer to the first is contained in what has gone before respecting the Fall and the consequence thereof, and may be shortly recapitulated thus. The course of God's eternal will was so ordained that the sin of disobedience wrought a change in the nature of Adam; which change is entailed upon all who in the regular course of humanity partake of his substance. That this change consists outwardly of a withdrawal of essential bodily life, and inwardly of a withdrawal of essential holiness, sufficiently explains the alienation of our whole nature

from GOD. To say that "without holiness no man can see the LORD," is only to say that light and darkness can have no fellowship; therefore our participation in the substance of the first man having brought us into the natural heritage of his changed nature, we partake in that privation of GOD's presence and communion which are expressed by the words, "no man can come to the FATHER."

I. But what we could not do of ourselves, GOD Himself in the person of GOD the SON has done for us by supernaturally taking into His Divine nature the manhood which was naturally alienated, and by ordaining means for our participation in this new and sanctified nature which make it as really ours as the old and unhallowed nature which our birth entails upon us. "GOD was manifest in the flesh." "The Word," which is GOD, "became flesh, and dwelt among us," and then a "new and living way was opened" through that sanctified humanity; so that He became the Way, the Truth, and the Life, for those who had no way open, no truth nor life in them. Thus does He stand between GOD and man a true Mediator. Above are the justice and holiness of GOD; below, the sin and consequent degeneration of man; united to the One by His eternal Sonship He stretches upward to the FATHER; joined to the other by His Manhood—"the likeness of sinful men," He stretches downward to us. Wherefore

though by ourselves we were infinitely divided from GOD; and though as GOD alone the SON would be as far from us as the FATHER; yet by stooping to our nature, and becoming that which none other is,—twofold—He has bridged over the impassable gulf; has become the ladder by which we mount to heaven, the channel by which GOD pours out His mercy and grace upon us.

II. But the Incarnation of the SON of GOD has not only opened a way through His flesh: it has also made His Person the very truth—"the light" shining in the darkness of our alienation. He was ever indeed truth and light in the verity of His eternal Godhead: but by His Manhood He has become the truth to *us*. Even as He declares of Himself, "*I am the Way*," having become the way by the taking of manhood into GOD: so does He say, "*I am the Truth*," because He has made His Incarnate Person the light and guide of the world. "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Now the SON of GOD is the truth by His Incarnation in three ways: first, by His teaching; secondly, by His example; and thirdly, by the imparting to us a new perception in our union with Him,—for "grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST."

1. Revelations had come down from heaven in

old time by angels, patriarchs, and prophets ; but “ GOD Who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last times spoken unto us by His SON.” None other ever so fully and plainly revealed the will of GOD. It does not seem as if any vessel had been pure enough to carry a perfect and open revelation until the SON took to Himself a sinless Body ; but when He did this, so exalted is the revelation made, that the very name given to the Revealer is the “ Word of GOD.” What light had the men of other dispensations compared with the light which came down from heaven to earth in the Incarnation of GOD the SON ? What truth ever was there like the truth as it is in “ JESUS,” and which is JESUS Himself, “ Who brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel ?” Before He came, the “ light of men” shone through the cloud of prophetic inspiration ; but in Him with direct and unhindered ray. For not now was the teacher *taught* of GOD, but was the very GOD Himself, teaching the things which He knew, and not the things which had been told Him. Wherefore having opened a way in His flesh, by linking heaven and earth together ; He also became the light to guide us therein : “ I am the Way, and the Truth.”

2. Again, He became the truth also by the perfection of His example. His pure Body,—“ holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,” set

up a standard such as there never had been before in the world; and this was made more illustrious by the perfection of His subsequent life. He was the very "LAMB of GOD, without blemish and without spot." "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." And thus, by a probation absolutely unsullied with the smallest stain, He became a pattern of the spiritual life, fit ever to be set before men for their example; and to which they should ever be moulding themselves, if by any means they may attain somewhat of Its form and beauty. The meekness of Moses, the holiness of David, the faith of Peter were each marred by defects of passion, impurity, and unbelief; but the virtues of the holy JESUS were perfect virtues, as those of none other in man's nature. If any were pure, the man CHRIST JESUS was more pure; if any holy, He holier: if any devout, His devotion reached the bounds of human power; if any loving, He gave up His life for His friends. In Him all human purity, holiness, love, and devotion were gathered together, exalted, and transfigured by their contact with His Godhead; and afterward they were scattered abroad in life-giving rays as from the centre and embodiment of all moral excellence and truth.

3. And, in the next place, He became the truth to us by giving to us in our union with Him a new perception or instinct whereby we are able to discern

spiritual things as spiritual. The reach of our natural reason is high, yet are there things hidden from the wise and prudent, which are revealed to even babes in CHRIST. For the intuition of Divine truth depends not entirely, or chiefly on our natural faculties, but on that which is supernaturally added to us in our union with the GOD-Man. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of GOD; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."¹ Some men fret and grow displeased that there should be anything represented as a mystery in the kingdom of GOD. And others assume a veil of mystery as the cloak for their presumption and self-opinionativeness, as if a special revelation was made to them which caused their judgment to be infallible. Yet, if there are mysteries in natural things, in the earth, the air, in the firmament of heaven, even in our own persons, why should there not be mysteries in spiritual things and in the invisible world? And if such mysteries of the unseen world are to be discerned only by spiritual men, then must we set those aside as pretenders to this insight, who are unholy, vain, proud, uncharitable; and those who lay claim to it by direct communication between GOD and their spirits, or any otherwise than through the mediation of CHRIST. But in the newness of CHRIST all things become new;

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

and as in the union with the Incarnate Truth at the first, the regenerated receive new capacities for the discernment of spiritual things;¹ so in the renewal and strengthening of that union must be expected, —and in that only,—that higher instinct by which God reveals to His saints the mysteries of His kingdom. In this consists the “mind of CHRIST,” the deep conviction of truth, the acute sense of unseen realities round about our present life, and influencing us for untold good or evil, which leads to holy living and a holy death. If any of us have received such illumination (and all Christians have received it in greater or lesser measure) it is “because we are in Him that is true,” even “the SON of GOD,” Who “hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him.” He is the perfect truth, and “of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.”

III. Moreover, He Who is the Way, and the Truth, is also the Life. That which heathen poets wrote of the Providence of God is true in a still higher sense of our union with God Incarnate; “In Him we live, and move, and have our being;” for

¹ This is sometimes strikingly observed in the Baptism of adults. The instruction given before their admission to the Sacrament has been imparted with labour and difficulty, seeming to make little impression upon the heart; whereas afterwards there was plainly a power to receive and understand the truth in a far higher way, and to discern it with the heart as well as the intellect.

there can be neither spiritual life, nor spiritual energy except in CHRIST. "If any man be in CHRIST he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." "He that hath the SON, hath life, and he that hath not the SON hath not life." "As in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive;" "Because I live, ye shall live also;" such is the language of the new dispensation, setting out before us the beginning, middle, and end of our spiritual existence.

Now Holy Scripture teaches us that there is an analogy between the spiritual life which we have in CHRIST, and the life by which we are living and active creatures. Let us, therefore, compare one with the other.

We first of all receive life in ourselves at our natural birth into the world: so there is that which the HOLY SPIRIT has taught us is a being born after a spiritual manner, because at such a time we begin to receive grace "to become the sons of God," "being born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD."¹ Now, as natural birth gives us a place in the natural world, so does that birth by which we receive life in CHRIST, and become the sons of God, give us a place in His spiritual world. As natural birth gives rise to natural relationship, so that the newly-

¹ S. John i. 13.

born becomes son and heir; so we become the sons of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, in our spiritual birth. As the relationships of natural birth may be marred or annulled, so may the spiritual children of God become disobedient to their FATHER, and be displaced from their heritage in His kingdom. As natural birth brings upon us certain obligations of civil obedience and filial love, so does spiritual birth entail on us the strictest obligations of love and obedience to Him who thus becomes our FATHER and LORD. And lastly, it is of great significance in this chain of analogy, that as the life received at our natural birth may continue, or be destroyed, so at our new birth we receive a gift which may remain with us, or may be put away. For when we are born into the world and have become living beings, is not the first instinct of nature to preserve within us that life which we have received? And is not this the chief care, as we grow up to years of self-responsibility? And, on the other hand, if no care be taken of life, no sustenance provided, does it not depart from us by little and little, until we lose it altogether? There are many things necessary to maintain bodily life in full vigour. Cleanliness, exercise, each tend to its prolongation; and if disease or violence have placed it in danger, the physician's art is called in to heal and re-invigorate. Perhaps these are so far necessary that without them life

would be short, and the body mostly feeble. Such is the relation which prayers, and the ordinary usages of religion bear to our spiritual life; without their use we do not expect to find, and do not find, that any man can retain, even for a time, the life which was planted in his soul at his new birth into CHRIST. But there is something necessary beyond these; the body must be nourished day by day with a continual supply of food, or all the other means together will not keep alight the spark of life. It is by food that the child grows up to the strength of manhood; that the wear and tear of life is counteracted; the waste of the body supplied; the full energy of being kept up. And therefore it may be well said, that food is the very life of the body, essential alike to strength, health, and beauty.

Do we not see then in this, the reason our blessed LORD's life-giving union with our spiritual nature, is so often spoken of under the analogy of food, and the life which food supplies? As the Israelites "did eat angels' food," and were sustained by it alone during all their sojourn in the wilderness; so does He Who is the Life, declare of Himself, "I am that Bread of Life. . . . I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven." Moreover, He gives a reality and force to His words, by applying them in an especial manner to His Human Nature alone, saying, "The Bread that I will give" for the life of

the world "is My Flesh, that a man may eat thereof and not die if any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever." And when some who heard Him with unspiritual and faithless hearts were confused and mystified by these sayings ; He added as if in further explanation and more forcible reiteration of the truth, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." At first, He had drawn an analogy between His flesh, and the bread which nourishes our bodies ; then He adds words which seem to say, "As without bread you cannot sustain bodily life, so without Me you cannot sustain spiritual life. Ye partake of Me, the Life, by eating of My Flesh and Blood. 'He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.' 'Except ye eat' Me 'ye have no life in you.' 'He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever.'"

Now all this, as it clearly points out our LORD JESUS CHRIST in His human nature to be the true Life of man ; so does it also point to some definite mode of participation on our part, by which He is communicated to our spiritual nature. The vivid words He uses cannot be mere metaphors ; the oft repeated phraseology derived from so common and plain an act as that of taking food, cannot mean mere meditation, or mental effort. There is a consistency of expression both in the holy Gospels, and also in the

Apostolic writings which shows that the mystery of eating CHRIST was one well known and commonly received in the Church. For when our LORD Himself had removed the visible token of His Manhood, was there any change in the mode of expression whereby His communication of life to us is represented by those whom He left behind? There is still a "communion (or communication) of the Blood of CHRIST," and a communication of His Body,¹ by eating and by drinking²—a supernatural effect following upon a natural act; a spiritual and inward grace conjoined with an outward and bodily sign. And can we, on any reasonable principles dissociate these words of our LORD and His Apostle, and that which they point to, from the holy ordinance which the Church has ever put before Christians as the Sacrament of the LORD's Supper? There are the outward signs by which the Incarnate Truth Himself represented the communication of His own blessed Presence to the souls of men; there is the broken bread, and there the bread which we bless; are they not the communication to us of the Body and the Blood? are they not that which He said? And in His Body and His Blood does He not really present to our souls that Human Nature which is the Life,—by which we live because He lives in us? Surely these outward signs of His Presence are visible tokens

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16.² 1 Cor. xi. 26.

of an invisible reality by their means accomplished ; they are to us the bread of heaven, and the fruit of the True Vine ; the corn and wine wherewith He makes us strong in the strength, not of this world, but of His mystical kingdom.

Thus then, does CHRIST give us Himself for the life of our souls ; providing in His mercy earthly and visible means whereby we may lay hold of His mediation, and go on in the path of the Atonement which He has wrought between heaven and earth. And a thoughtful reverent consideration of Sacraments in their entire dependence on the great principle of our faith—that CHRIST JESUS is the one Mediator between GOD and man ;—a conviction of His continual work in making our souls at one with GOD by a *supernatural use of means* ; a perception of Him as the Life, independent of or *without* ourselves, by Whose entrance within us we are made alive, and by Whose strength we are made strong ; this will go far to establish in our hearts a system of practical religion which will bring us life at the last. We shall then look out of ourselves to Him ; not expecting to gain union with Him by any effort of our thoughts or will, but by laying ourselves at His feet, and asking Him to do that for us which we can never do for ourselves. The more we feel the power of Sacramental grace, the more humble shall we grow, in the conviction that we are utterly weak, and He

alone strong; that of ourselves we can do nothing that is good, but “can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth” us.

Oh! let us lift up our eyes from all other paths, and look only on that which CHRIST has opened in His Incarnate Presence with men. Not for any profit to Himself did He take our nature; but for our sakes alone, that we might be delivered from the burden of sin, regenerated and sanctified by His Blood, and exalted to Everlasting Life. He became the Son of Man that we might be sons of GOD; He took upon Him the form of a servant that we might be priests and kings; He became sin for us Who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in Him; He became vile in His FATHER’S sight that we might become precious. Let us not reject the good gifts of His Incarnation; He is the Way opened for us sinners, let us walk in Him; He is the Truth, pray Him that He will be our Light; He is the Life, receive Him that we may live in Him, and He in us. As the world became His dwelling place for a time, so let our hearts be opened to Him now, and be made a fit Temple for His Presence; that the Life of His Incarnate holiness and power may be in us a well of life, springing up into the Life Everlasting of His perfected glory.

IV.

THE NAME OF THE AT-ONE-MAKER.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 9, 10, 11.

GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, AND GIVEN HIM A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME: THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THINGS IN HEAVEN, AND THINGS IN EARTH, AND THINGS UNDER THE EARTH; AND THAT EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.

It has grown into a proverb, that names are mere sounds, words whose importance rests, not in reality, but association. If it be so with the names of earthly things and persons,—and whether it is or not I will not stay to inquire,—it is certainly not so with names written in the kingdom of God, for there they are often the expression of deep and living truths.

There is first and highest of all, the Name of God. In the days before evangelical relations were established and revealed in the Person and Work of the At-one-Maker, He was “known by” His “Name JEHOVAH,” a Name sacred and incommunicable, de-

claring the essential self-existence of "I AM" the "living FATHER."¹

In our own tongue also, we know Him by a Name which is a reality, and not a mere sound ; for "God" is simply a form of "GOOD," the supreme GOOD, the original and spring of all that is holy, just, and loving ; the Name of Him Who is the essence and cause of all goodness, and Who by His dealings with men has verified the reality of It in all Its fulness. "There is none good but One, that is God."²

And as with the Names by which He has revealed Himself to us, so also with those which He has given to men. When He made His covenant with the father of the circumcision, He said "neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but Abraham," that is, the father of a great multitude. And to Jacob He gave the name of "Israel," a Prince of God, prevailing with Him, standing in honour before Him, and receiving at His hands bounty and favour.

He therefore Who bestowed the tongue upon man, has given words for its utterance, which embody in vivid reality, the likeness of the persons whose names they are. And above all other names, He gave One to His only-begotten SON witnessing to us Who and What He is, revealing mysteries of faith, and miracles of love. "His Name was called JESUS, which was

¹ Compare Exod. iii. 14, and S. John vi. 57.

² S. Matt. xix. 17.

so named of the angel, before He was conceived in the womb." A Name, as it looks to the Person Who bears it, both of humility and exaltation : as it looks to us, of peace and love.

And first of all, this Name JESUS is endeared to us by the most tender associations. Some names by which we speak of heavenly things, are as the portraitures of men whom we have never seen ; but the sound of this Name is like calling up the memory and countenance of a friend at rest. When it falls upon the ear, it is like a strain of love sung to the harps of angels, the chorus of which, as of old, is peace and good will. Can any hear this Name, and not think of Him Who "went about doing good," healing the sick, comforting the sorrowful, drawing towards Him those who were wearied with the burden of sin ; of the Good Shepherd going after His lost sheep in the wilderness, and giving His life for them at last ? We say the Name JESUS, and there arises before us a sweet vision, the Consoler of the sonless widow, and the sister of Lazarus ; the Provider of bread for fainting multitudes ; the Friend of publicans and sinners whom all would shun but He ; It recalls the patient Sufferer, as He pleaded for His persecutors, for they knew not what they did ; the loving Son, caring at the last for His Virgin Mother ; the pitying SAVIOUR, calling His sheep by their names, even as He hung upon the Cross.

There is no compassion, gentleness, or love, which is not symbolized to us by this holy Name; so that we teach our little ones to "come to JESUS," as to One than Whom father or mother are not more full of loving-kindness, or more ready to fold them in arms peace-giving and secure.

But besides all these associations which cling around It, the Name is in Itself a revelation of the atonement and the At-one-Maker; "Thou shalt call His Name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins." It tells us in one short word all that He came to do and suffer for men. It sums up the mystery of the Fall and the Restoration. It speaks to us of reconciliation and forgiveness; of the cleansing of regeneration upon earth, and the white robing of the saints in heaven. For the work of the SAVIOUR comprehends all these, and none of them miss expression in His holy Name. In proportion, therefore, as any of us know our own selves, the original corruption of our nature; our weakness and daily necessities; our falls and needful renewals; our unworthiness to enter when we come even to the very gate of heaven; in such proportion as each of us knows these, shall we value the Name of love and power which can cleanse and heal, and give us life everlasting. "For there is none other name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved, but only the Name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST," a Name

above every name given to Him, Whom, because "He humbled Himself," "GOD hath highly exalted."

Moreover, because this Name, JESUS, is a sign of brotherhood, it is therefore a pledge of pure and unmeasured sympathy. For it is the Name which belongs to the SON of GOD as SON of MAN; the Name which He accepted when He made Himself of no reputation, and "took upon Him the form of a servant; and was made in the likeness of men;"¹ the Name in which He "humbled Himself" even to the bearing of our griefs, and the carrying of our sorrows; the Name in which He received the "chastisement of our peace." It is a continual sign to us, that He Who "thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD," was yet not ashamed to call us men His brethren; that He bound Himself to us by the bond of fleshly relationship; that He partook of our humiliation to make us partakers of His glory. Whatever then, there is of pure and holy affection in human relationship; whatever love; whatever sympathy; whatever desire for a brother's good; each of them is pledged to us in transcendent kind by the holy Name JESUS. For it marks the experience that reaches to our every want, and the will of a "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."² What is the closest earthly tie, what the fondest affection, what the clearest knowledge of our hearts, what the fullest

¹ Phil. ii. 7, 8.

² Prov. xviii. 24.

sympathy, what the softest tenderness? Imagine them all, and yet our imaginings fall short of the tenderness, sympathy, knowledge, and affection, which lie veiled beneath this word of fulness.

Lastly, It is a Name of exaltation and perfection, which means on the lips of Faith, "My LORD and my GOD." For when He had "finished the work which" His FATHER had given Him "to do,"¹ He who bore it,—“this same JESUS,”² ascended into heaven, and sat down for ever at the right hand of the FATHER, where "He shall reign for ever and ever," "King of Kings and LORD of Lords."³

Because then the Name of the At-one-maker expresses all this, what we have been to Him,—sinners bringing Him down from the throne of GOD; what He has been to us, the SAVIOUR, cleansing us from sin, and lifting up our nature to heaven; because It is a Name of Love unmeasured, and the Name of a Man Who is GOD, therefore "at the Name of JESUS, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and" "every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER."

It remains then to inquire, what do these words of S. Paul really mean; are they the words of an orator, exaggerated or metaphorical; or are they the expression of a literal duty which we are required to

¹ S. John xvii. 4. ² Acts i. 11. ³ Rev. xi. 15; xix. 16.

render to the holy Name JESUS? Let us look at them from three points of view; for "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established."

And first, reason will tell us, that if the Name of JESUS expresses so much, and is so closely related to Himself, it would be no unnatural thing for those feelings to be roused in our hearts at the sound of His Name, which would be, in a higher degree, at the sight of His Presence. When friends are absent, or departed, their names are as a master-key, unlocking the treasury of love, and opening out its jewels to our sight. And if the name be that of a saint whom God has taken to His rest, we could not find in our heart to speak it otherwise, than with deep and chastened respect, which will be more deep and more chastened in proportion to the love we bore towards them. The name is in such a case, the representative of the person; it embodies to the mental eye, what was once present to our bodily sight. And as with these names of earthly association and meaning, so but in a far higher degree with the Name of JESUS. Were His Person visibly present, we should adore Him with the humblest posture, and the most reverential words, declaring by gesture and word that He is our LORD and our GOD. What then seems more reasonable, or more natural, than to give some portion of that devout homage which

we should render to His Person, to that holy Name by which GOD has been pleased that He should be known and represented; than that "at the Name of JESUS, every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD."

But, what if reason teaches us differently from Holy Scripture? In the present case, at least, the two seem closely to coincide; for a special reverence to the Name of JESUS is frequently indicated, and frequently expressed. There are several places in the writings of the holy Apostles in which when that Name is mentioned, a pause or break occurs, and (according to a practice of the Jews when speaking of JEHOVAH) a short doxology or sentence of praise, is inserted.

Thus S. Peter, when preaching at the house of Cornelius, makes reverent mention of the Name of his Master, saying,—“The word which GOD sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by JESUS CHRIST (He is LORD of all.)”¹ The same holy Apostle also, on three several occasions in his writings breaks off abruptly at the Name of JESUS, adding words which have no other connection with what he is saying, than as acknowledging the Deity of his LORD. The words which he adds are, “To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”² Similar words are used by S. John in the opening of the

¹ Acts x. 36.

² 1 S. Pet. iv. 11; v. 10, 11; 2 S. Pet. iii. 18.

book of Revelation, and in the same manner, by way of parenthesis.¹ The same also by S. Jude in ending his Epistle. And of S. Paul too, many such expressions of reverence are on record; "The God and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST (Which is blessed for evermore)² knoweth that I lie not."³ Again; "Of whom as concerning the flesh"—i.e., David, "CHRIST came, (Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.)"⁴ Again; in his two Epistles to Timothy,⁵ in the end of that to the Hebrews,⁶ and more or less evidently in other places.

From such passages, it would appear that the Apostles were accustomed often to use some short form of words, when the Name of JESUS was named as a confession that although JESUS is the Name of a Man, yet is that Man indeed "God, blessed for evermore." They confessed with their tongues what they believed in their hearts, that "JESUS CHRIST was LORD."

And doubtless, as the Name JEHOVAH is given to the LORD JESUS, so to the Name JESUS was given the same honour as that with which in earlier days the incommunicable Name was honoured. For the Jews, from the time of Moses, were ever taught to reverence the Name of God. When the scribe wrote

¹ Rev. i. 5, 6.

² As we say our *blessed* LORD.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 31.

⁴ Rom. ix. 5.

⁵ 1 Tim. i. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 18.

⁶ Heb. xiii. 21.

It in copying the Holy Scriptures, he offered up a prayer; and when any spake it, they would say afterwards, "The LORD He is God," or "Blessed be God for ever." So that the words of the text, even if they had been merely a figure of rhetoric, would have led men, by the analogy of ancient practice, to the belief that similar usages were recognized and enjoined under the Christian dispensation.

And lastly, what is taught us by reason and the written word, is also confirmed and illustrated by the practice of the Church. Of this we have daily evidence, in the custom of all Christians when they say the Name of JESUS in the Creeds; acknowledging by a lowly gesture, that they confess JESUS CHRIST to be LORD. And although, when saying the Creed, we are making the most solemn use we can of this holy Name; yet there seems no sufficient reason why we should omit on other occasions the same reverent gesture with which we honour it there. At least it cannot be superstition or over-scrupulousness at one time and not at another.

Besides which argument of traditionary custom, there is an express statute of the Church which enjoins as follows:—"When in time of Divine Service the LORD JESUS shall be mentioned, due and lowly reverence shall be done by all present, as it hath been accustomed; testifying by these outward ceremonies and gestures, their inward humility, Christian reso-

lution, and due acknowledgment, that the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the True and Eternal SON of GOD, is the only SAVIOUR of the world, in Whom alone all the mercies, graces, and promises of GOD to mankind, for this life, and for the life to come, are fully and wholly comprised.”¹

I have, indeed, heard it objected, that our present usage is not after all that enjoined by the text,—if the words do convey an injunction;—for we neither bow the knee, nor make open confession of our LORD’s Divinity at the mention of His Name JESUS.² In answer to which, it seems enough to say that the custom of our part of CHRIST’s Church does not recognize the “*genuflexion*,” or bending of the knee, except in the act of Prayer; that the spirit of the Apostolic words is well carried out in the lowly bowing of the head; and that this ordinary gesture of respect and adoration, even if the bowing of the most honourable member of the body is not so literally in accordance with the text as would be the bowing down of the whole person, is yet such a devotion as we may reasonably believe to be acceptable, since it symbolizes our own lowliness, and is done

¹ Canon XVIII.

² This objection would hardly have been noticed, but that it was the chief argument used by a high and learned authority when preaching in a cathedral church, and deprecating the general use of the gesture referred to.

“to the glory of GOD.” Moreover, if we understand the gesture to express the confession that “the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the true and eternal SON of GOD, is the only SAVIOUR of the world,” it is as open a confession of His Divinity as any we could make with the lips.

But, a more general objection is applied to this particular act of bowing at the Name of JESUS, viz., Does religion consist in these forms? are they necessary in a spiritual service? Certainly, forms are a very small part of religion; but when we learn that the holy angels whose worship is the most spiritual of all service, use forms and gestures of reverence, falling before the throne on their faces and worshipping GOD,¹ we dare not say that they are unnecessary for us, who worship Him, not with songs of victory, but in the weakness of the flesh, with the world and the adversary still to war against. The whole man, body as well as soul, is enlisted in the service of CHRIST; how then can any part be exempted from doing Him homage? Gestures of the body must always be the natural expression of emotions in the soul. The SON of GOD Himself kneeled down in His agony, and “bowed His head” in token of voluntary submission to the Will of His FATHER, at the giving up of His Spirit. The penitent smote upon his breast; angels veil their faces before the

¹ Rev. vii. 11.

ineffable glory; and the redeemed will bow before the throne. And so now it will be, that the heart cannot be engrossed with the worship of God, and yet the body give no sign.

In short, I cannot but think that the plea of "greater spirituality" which is sometimes brought forward as an argument against most gestures of reverence, is merely theoretical;¹ and that experience of their use speaks of their high value. The fear of formality in *external* worship almost naturally ends in irreverence. Who is not conscious of wandering thoughts, weariness, and indevotion? How often, in the course of Divine Worship, is the repetition of the Creed or the LORD'S Prayer a true act of devotion? It may be, that this *internal* formality which most will confess with sorrow, arises in various degree, from want of devotional employment for the outward man. The thoughts wander, because the eyes are not at rest; the confession of sins is wanting in penitence, because the body is wanting in humility; there is little adoration in the heart, because the head is not bowed down. It may be that those gestures which are slighted, or even despised and ridiculed, are the schooling of the body to the work of heaven; that here below they fix the whole

¹ This is indeed an argument, which, if extended *without prejudice* must naturally end in such silent pretences of worship as we find among some eccentric sects, calling themselves Christians.

man in *habits* of reverence and seriousness, and unseal living springs of a more spiritual worship than the soul can taste without their assistance.

Let none shrink then from the lowly gesture which the Church enjoins on the authority of Holy Scripture, any more than they shrink from bowing the knee in prayer. When the world all around is calling in question the Divine Nature of the LORD of glory, let devout Christians make their constant confession of it as often as the Name JESUS is uttered, not that they may be “seen of men” to their own praise, but “to the glory of God.” Knowing “there is none other Name given under heaven whereby we must be saved;” “Day by day we magnify Thee; And we worship Thy Name ever world without end.” Thine, O most holy JESUS, our LORD and our GOD; Thine, our SAVIOUR, our Brother, and our Friend: Thine, Who art in this life our Strength, in the valley of death our Consoler, in the Judgment Day our Surety; and in Life Everlasting our “exceeding great Reward.”

V.

THE AT-ONE-MAKER'S UNDEFILED BODY.

GAL. iv. 4.

GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON, MADE OF A WOMAN.

IT is an essential ground of our belief in the Incarnation and all the blessed truths which follow from it, that our LORD JESUS CHRIST became man, not by creation as the first Adam, nor yet by natural generation as all the children of Adam. "He was conceived by the HOLY GHOST, born of the Virgin Mary;" therefore the conception and birth of the Son of Man are only second in mysteriousness to the eternal generation of the SON of GOD. Let us, as to the nature of this mystery, be silent and adore; our present concern is with the fact and its consequences, into which, asking God's mercy to keep us within the bounds of "the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints" we will reverently examine.

He Who was to be the Cleanser of mankind could not be otherwise than pure. To all other necessities

of GOD's will, as for instance, the perfection of the At-one-maker's Manhood, and the Divinity of His Person, this also must be added, that He should receive the human nature by some means whereby it would be free from the stain of Adam. Hence He took it not to Himself in the natural way, which would have subjected His soul and body to the natural law of original sin, but through a holy Virgin in whose virginal conception there was no taint of impurity. Every ordinary man has weight enough to carry in his own sins; he can by no means offer to bear those of his brethren. The adversary has in all of us a point or fulcrum on which to rest his temptations; but in the Holy One this was wanting; and as He was at the first sinless, so to the last, Satan could gain no hold upon Him. The Fountain-head of His Manhood's purity was He Whose special office it is to sanctify; and the vessel wherein It received Form and Substance was one fit for the Master's service. The LAMB of GOD was therefore "without blemish, and without spot," and having no sins of His own to carry, able to be "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction" for the sins of all others. When the angel announced His coming birth, he called Him "that HOLY THING," and JESUS was throughout "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." The LORD had created "a new thing in the

earth, a woman," had compassed a man.¹ A Virgin had conceived and born a Son.² The Virgin woman was Mary; the Man Whom she had encompassed in her womb, was GOD "made Man, for us men, and for our salvation." As Eve was the gate by which the guilt of the Fall had entrance, so one of the daughters of Eve was chosen by GOD, in the fitness and consistency of His Providence, to be the gate by which the salvation of men should enter, that they might be restored to the bliss of Eden in the New Creation. The Seed of the woman had come at last.

Thus the truth of our blessed LORD's Incarnation, and the sufficiency of His Human Nature for the end in view, are so intimately interwoven with the human person from whom His substance was taken, that we are necessarily led to consider who and what that person was, and wherein she fulfilled the conditions which GOD's inscrutable Will had set for our salvation.

She was indeed so essentially a part of the Providence of GOD in the redemption of mankind, that the voice of prophecy had already spoken of her in long bygone ages. And yet, exalted as the office assigned to her, Holy Scripture gives the narrative of her life in very few words; and the light of authentic tradition adds little to our knowledge respecting her. We have no reason to think that

¹ Jer. xxxi. 22.

² Isa. vii. 14.

she was otherwise than a humble maiden, born of peasant family, who, although they could claim descent from David, out of whom the Root of Jesse, the Righteous Branch was to spring, were yet living in retirement and poverty, and in an obscure part of that land over which their forefathers had reigned. While occupying so lowly a station in the eyes of men, God separated her for a purpose which at once exalted her to a higher position than any other woman ever did, or can attain to. "The angel" Gabriel came in unto her, and said, Hail thou that art highly favoured, the LORD is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind, what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with GOD. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His Name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the SON of the Highest: and the LORD GOD shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."¹ Thus from a simple maiden of a country village, the espoused wife of a mere artizan, Mary became the Mother of the SAVIOUR of men and SON of GOD; and her name, hitherto unknown, is henceforth for

¹ S. Luke i. 28—33.

ever, to be blended with His in our declaration of the great event on which our hopes depend,—His birth into our nature for the salvation of the world. What a mighty event was this announced by the heavenly messenger! what a wondrous work for which the Virgin was set apart! Never were words more real uttered than those of the angel, “Hail thou that art highly favoured,” for surely no favour that God ever bestowed on any human creature could approach to this. He gave great blessing to the Patriarchs when He made them the direct progenitors of the MESSIAH, saying, “In thy seed shall all the earth be blessed;” He bestowed great favour upon Moses who was raised up as a prophet and leader, in the likeness of that Deliverer that was afterwards to arise; He appointed the long line of prophets also to be His instruments in making His Divine word known among men; but was any favour or blessing which God had heretofore bestowed on His servants equal to this given to the blessed Virgin, that she was to become the means by which “God” was to be “with us,” in the form of man? Remember that the Babe Whom Mary carried in her bosom was not alone the Infant Who lay in the manger of Bethlehem; not alone the Child subject to Joseph the carpenter, and Mary his humble wife; not alone the lowly JESUS Who had not where to lay His head; not alone the suffering JESUS Whose

Person was liable to the pains of our natural mortality. That Babe Whom Mary bore was the very same JESUS Who ascended up on high, having led captivity captive; the very same JESUS Who now "sitteth at the right hand of GOD in the glory of the FATHER, from whence He shall come to judge both the quick and the dead;" that Babe was He Who is the object of our faith and worship, and than Whom there is none other Name given under heaven "whereby we must be saved." When we think of this full reality,—that JESUS exalted in heaven is the SON of Mary, no less than JESUS in humiliation, our minds fail to measure the blessed nearness to GOD with which the Virgin Mary was honoured; and we fall back with reverential reserve on the words of the holy angel, "Blessed art thou among women."

Our thoughts are indeed so engaged by the relation which she bore to the SAVIOUR of men, that we hardly turn aside to contemplate in Mary, as in other saints, the beauty of personal holiness. And yet, as might be well believed of the one woman chosen from all others, even without record, so we find from what little is recorded, that she who was raised up a tabernacle for her Incarnate LORD was made a fit and holy vessel for so high a service. "The LORD was with her," and she "had found favour with GOD." He from Whom all good gifts come, had

given to Mary, before He bestowed the highest gift of all, the blessing of a devout heart, trained up in His love and fear. It is a loving tradition of this which places her upon her knees when the angel Gabriel came into her presence, a tradition honoured by long reception, and according with the experience of saints. Indeed there shines around her throughout all the simple narrative of the Annunciation, a bright radiance of faith and humility. Nor was it from lips unaccustomed to contemplative devotion that the Divine canticle flowed so readily which she shortly after uttered on the visit to her cousin Elizabeth; a song ever since offered up by the Church at her daily evensong, with thanksgiving and joy. To this devout and holy maiden came the messenger from heaven, saying, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the LORD is with thee, blessed art thou among women;" and "when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind, what manner of salutation this should be." Such a marvellous Annunciation was it, that she could not understand what high blessing was in store for her. But when her bewilderment was over, and she knew to what the salutation of the angel pointed; faithful and obedient, she believed the promise and gave her will to God, and said, "Behold the handmaid of the LORD, be it unto me according to thy word." So said Elizabeth of her afterwards, "Blessed is she

that believed, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the LORD." It was fitting that, as in her unbelief Eve was the mother of the Fall, so Mary of whom came the promised Seed, should by her faith, be the mother of the Restoration.

But with the full consciousness of her high destiny, there came no exaltation of pride, on account of the unparalleled dignity to which GOD had advanced her. Her devout mind knew well to Whom alone all praise and worship are due, and she sang in such strains as had once sounded to the harp of her namesake Miriam, or the "mother in Israel," or the favoured Hannah: "My soul doth magnify the LORD: and my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD my SAVIOUR. For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is Mighty hath done to me great things: and Holy is His Name." And, as of old so now, the song was of victory: "He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our forefathers, to Abraham, and to his seed, for ever."¹

The condensed record of the Annunciation gives us a vivid impression of the Blessed Virgin's holiness, devotion, humility, and faith; which impression is confirmed by what we read of her at a subsequent

¹ S. Luke ii. 46—55.

time, when her CHILD that was "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel,"¹ began to be about His "FATHER'S business." As she "cast in her mind," the saying of the angel, and "kept all" the "things" that were told by the shepherds, "and pondered them in her heart;" so on the occasion in question, when her CHILD used mysterious words she did not let them pass away from her contemplation, but "kept all these sayings in her heart." Who can tell what other "sayings" this "all" may comprehend? "sayings" of the CHILD that was God, heard only by His Blessed Mother, and treasured up with loving reverence to be her solace in after days.

But soon a veil begins to be drawn before "the woman," a veil of Light flowing from her holy "Seed," in which the highest splendour of earthly relationship is subdued and almost hidden; for what borrowed light is not obscured by the rising of the Sun? Henceforward the Blessed Virgin is named but five times amid all the great events that followed. Yet each time there is a significance of meaning not to be passed over.

Once, is on the occasion alluded to before, when the holy JESUS, at twelve years of age, was found in the Temple conversing with the learned teachers of His nation. Her words of greeting:—"Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold Thy father and

¹ S. Luke ii. 34.

I have sought Thee sorrowing," were met by a reply that conveyed in some sort, a reproof and a gentle charge of interference. "How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My FATHER's business?"

Not unlike was the answer given to His Mother by our LORD at the Marriage Feast. She sought a miracle at His hands,—her faith revealing His power—and as it would almost seem, urged it by an appeal to her relation of maternity. But He answered, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come;" appearing to disclaim, not only all authority on her part over His Divine Nature, but even all influence exercised thereon through His human affections.

A third time there is a trace of the same depreciation of her earthly relationship to Him. While He was ministering to a large assembly, one came bearing a message that His mother and brethren were desiring to speak with Him. And "He answered, and said unto him that told Him, Who is My mother, and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hands to His disciples and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the Will of My FATHER Which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." As also once before He had declared obedience to be a higher blessing,—so exalted is it,

—than that of an earthly kindred with Him. “Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked.” “Yea, rather blessed,” said He, “are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it.” In all this there seems a sort of warning in the words of our blessed LORD, wherewith He pointed out, in His mercy, a danger to be avoided by His Church, in after ages.

We find Mary at the Cross when the words of Simeon were fully realized, “A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also ;” and once more in the upper chamber with the holy Apostles ; but beyond the loving memories of the Church, that she lived for some years after, an example of purity and resignation, we have no clear view of her from that time ; for her part in the work of the Atonement having long ended, and faith being satisfied, curiosity has no entrance into the cloud which veils her from our sight.

What place then does the Blessed Virgin hold in the eye of God’s Church ? It is plain that we must contemplate her from two points of view, from one of which we see her in common with all saints ; from the other standing apart, as the Providence of God has ordered.

As a chosen vessel for the sanctuary, one fit to become the mother of mankind’s Saviour, God had been with her all her life long, and favoured her

with such grace as made her to grow up a saint among the highest circle of His elect. It may be that in her was preserved that purity which is now the gift of regeneration, and the love of God rooted in her heart at the first had never given way, or been encumbered by weeds of a worldly growth. In such a light, the blessed Virgin Mary is to be regarded as one of the saints whom the Church is ever to hold before the eyes of her children as examples of God's favour, and patterns of holy living.

But, beyond this, the near relation of the Blessed Virgin to God the SON gives her a special claim upon our veneration. As the angel Gabriel declared her "Blessed among women;" as Elizabeth, the mother of the second Elias, used the very same expression, by the inspiration of the HOLY GHOST; as Mary herself said,—also by inspiration,—“all generations shall call me blessed;” so are we to honour the Mother of our LORD as one removed from the common circle of mankind or even of saintship, and brought into a nearness with God never realized in any other. We can point to Abraham, the “Friend of God;” to Moses, who “talked with HIM face to face,” so that a reflection of the ineffable glory remained in his countenance; to David the “man after God's own heart;” and to other holy saints on whom special blessings were poured out from on high: but it is to the Blessed Virgin Mary alone, of all creatures,

that we can point as one who was brought near to God, not only by faith and holy intercourse, but even by the relations of nature, in which she was made the Mother of our LORD, Whose Name is Wonderful, the Mighty God.¹

Therefore, the Church of all ages has revered the Blessed Virgin as a woman and a saint standing apart from and above all others; one whom to honour, was to honour the LORD. And this, more perhaps than for any other reason,—because in her person is represented the principle on which our salvation depends; that the Eternal WORD became by her the Seed of the woman, in Whom the consequences of the Fall were to be neutralized.

Moreover, devout minds have ever considered the Mother of the sinless One, as being, from her very office, the personification of human purity,—that is of the purity of grace, as distinct from the ineffable holiness of Him Who alone was pure by *nature*. His purity was indeed heavenly,—a glory “white as the Light;” her’s only earthly,—the whiteness of the lily; but such purity as may belong to humanity born in sin, such we may believe to have been hers,—vouchsafed to her that she might be a fit tabernacle wherein the Holy JESUS should put on His Manhood. And as we cannot but believe that God would have kept her, by His power and goodness,—

¹ Isa. ix. 6.

to this very end; so a reverent heart will find it hard to doubt that He preserved her pure and holy through all her life, as having been the earthly temple wherein He had for many months dwelt in bodily form; sanctified once by His Presence, and therefore separated to Him alone for ever; "A garden enclosed . . . a spring shut up, a fountain sealed;"¹ a gate that shall not be opened, by which no man shall enter.²

All this is plain Scriptural doctrine; yet when we come to put into simple undisguised expression, what every pious mind loves to *believe* concerning the Blessed Mother of JESUS, there is a not unnatural fear and shrinking, lest we should be giving to her more reverence than by right belongs. It is a shrinking not unnatural, for this reason, that we have good cause to think some have been carried away by mere feeling (which they mistook for devotion) to appropriate attributes to the Blessed Virgin, which belong to her no more than to any other creature, but only to GOD. Instead of regarding her real personal sanctity, such only as other saints have,

¹ Solomon's Song iv. 12.

² Ezek. xlv. 2.

Although this reverent belief is the natural result of a full reception of Scripture doctrine, and therefore it is very desirable to regard the Mother of our LORD as the Blessed Mary ever a Virgin; yet as her perpetual virginity is not to be "proved by Holy Scripture," it has never been made an Article of Faith by the Church.

—though perhaps all in lesser degrees,—attained to; and reverencing in addition to it, that holiness with which she was endowed as being the instrument of our LORD's Incarnation; instead, in fact, of looking upon her as a woman raised for a special purpose above all others of the human race; some have come to speak of her, (whether or not their words mean all they seem to mean) as if she had been raised to the throne of God. And moreover, contrary to all reason, and to the manifest teaching of the Gospels, it is a common practice of those I speak of, to consider that because the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God the SON; therefore she exercises over Him in His glory a maternal influence of such a nature as is common among men. Such principles as these, and the practices arising out of them, may well cause us to be guarded in our words when we speak of the Blessed Virgin, and to take care that while we give her,—to the glory of God,—that reverence which He has taught us to give, by the Holy Scriptures; we do not let the poetry of imaginative minds substitute itself for the devout respect of holy religion.

But, at the same time, while we take heed to keep ourselves free from those irreverent imaginings which usurp the name of religion, we must also look to it, that we do not weaken the defences of the truth. In the Blessed Virgin we have a personification of

the great fundamental principle of our faith, that THE WORD OF GOD WAS MADE FLESH WITHOUT PARTAKING OF SIN.

For this reason, the Church of GOD has been very jealous, (ever since the title was called in question,) of the name by which the Virgin is known in her courts all over the world,—Mary the “Mother of GOD ;” for except we maintain with those who deny the LORD that bought them, that JESUS the Son of Mary was nothing more than a very holy and extraordinary man, we must needs acknowledge that He was, even from the Day of Annunciation, what the angel declared in His name “Emmanuel ;” GOD.

It is for the same cause, out of reverent care to guard our belief in the complete freedom of the sinless One from taint of our corruption, that the Church has ever believed,—though not enforcing her belief,—that “Mary was at once maid and mother, remaining in the sanctity of virginity, yet sharing in the blessing of maternity.”

In short, the usage and teaching of the Church may be summed up, according to the words of an English Bishop :—“Blessed Mary ; he does not honour thee too much, who maketh not a goddess of thee.” It is necessary to give her a due measure of honour, lest the truth of our LORD’S Incarnation be undermined : and seeing that GOD has raised her so far above ordinary womanhood, and bound her

by the ties of nature to His own Person, we can only give her *excess* of honour, by giving her attributes which belong to Him alone. In respect to her personal character we may indeed, very well appropriate to her the words of the wise man: "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." In respect to her relation to the LORD of glory we may certainly say with the angel, "Blessed art thou among women;" and with Elizabeth, "the Mother of my LORD."

We know,—or at least it may be proved—that there are those who assign to the blessed Virgin, an honour scarcely to be distinguished from that which is due only to the adorable TRINITY; a devotional service distinguishable only by scholastic minds; and an authority in the courts of heaven, which can belong to One Divine as well as human, but cannot belong to one who is not God. We know, on the other hand, there are those who think a great deal of their soundness in religious opinion consists in the depreciation of that honour which is justly due to her. It is therefore incumbent upon all who desire to walk in the light of truth, and avoid those errors which mostly lie in extreme opinions; to have a good foundation resting in Holy Scripture, as taught to us not by our own individual judgment, not out of any modern developement of doctrine, but by the collective wisdom of the Church of God, and

out of the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Let us pray God that we may ever thus hold the faith in completeness and integrity, as it is set forth in the Creed ; neither taking away from, nor adding to the truth ; nor ever shrinking, through insufficient reasons, from a plain avowal of hearty belief in the words we say with our lips.

VI.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE AT-ONE-MAKER'S BODY.

S. JOHN xix. 37.

THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED.

THE truths of GOD's kingdom range themselves in a mysterious order. JESUS CHRIST our LORD, begotten of His FATHER before all worlds, was born of His Mother the Blessed Virgin Mary in the world. The LORD of Lords came down from heaven, and joined His Godhead to the nature of a little child. He Who was from everlasting grew up as little children grow in stature ; He Who is of Infinite knowledge, increased in wisdom ; He Who created men, was Himself subject to hunger and poverty. And most marvellous of all, the LORD of glory submitted to be despised and put to shame ; " the Life " made Himself to die. " He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried." " Great " indeed " is the mystery of godliness." " My ways

are not your ways, neither are My thoughts your thoughts," saith the LORD.

Had men been set to invent for themselves and out of their own wisdom a plan of salvation, it would have been beyond all their thoughts that GOD should be found in fashion as a Man, that He should humble Himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Yet how familiarly we say now, as if it were the most natural occurrence that could happen,—“The LORD died to save sinners.” In the first ages, when the idea was not familiarized, men could not be brought to entertain it. A crucified GOD and SAVIOUR was to them a contradiction of terms, to the Jews a stumbling-block, even as when they cried, “If Thou be the CHRIST, save Thyself and come down from the Cross;” “to the Greeks foolishness,”—beyond the compass of their straitened philosophy. And, for a little time, even the chosen disciples looked doubtingly upon the death of their Master. They “trusted that it had been He Which should have redeemed Israel,” and behold, their expected REDEEMER had died the death of one accursed by the law. But when we thus call to mind the unbelief of Jews and Gentiles, and how “slow of heart,” even the chosen ones of CHRIST were “to believe” in His sufferings; let us also remember that our belief in them is formed upon the tradition of eighteen centuries, upon the coincidence of prophecy

and narrative, upon the knowledge of what a crucified SAVIOUR can do for us ; and that therefore, the incredulity of the first ages was far less unreasonable than any want of faith in our own. But, in truth, a careful understanding of our Blessed LORD's Incarnation will prevent any doubts concerning the results that followed. It seems not out of the ordinary course that He Who was truly Man as any ever born of woman, should be subject to death as all men ; the marvel is that He should condescend so to humble Himself as to take our nature upon Him. The light of prophecy also guides us to see that Whosoever should save the world must suffer and die for it ; that the Seed of the woman must gain the victory over the serpent, not without a contest and suffering, a " bruising of the heel." And all along the stream of inspiration, God revealed to men that their SAVIOUR must be One afflicted and full of sorrows, a Man, and a dying Man, Whose death was an absolute necessity, because a part of God's Providence for the world. " The Son of Man *must* go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed."¹ And of all that was foretold, He came short in no suffering ; but drank of the cup until He could say of His agony, " It is finished."

An ancient father has said that the sufferings of

¹ S. Matt. xvi. 21.

JESUS began with His conception in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, for such an act of unbounded humiliation must needs be reckoned one of suffering. So also in the first shedding of His blood at circumcision; in His subjection to His parents for many long years; in the poverty of His birth, and the lowness of His station in life; in all that whereby He humbled Himself to become like the lowest of ourselves, we must account that He suffered for our sakes. And when His ministry was about to begin, He added yet to these a more bitter trial, the forty days' fast, and the strong temptation. From that time at least He became a "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." What an affliction the want of a home is to an innocent and loving mind! Yet "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He created the world, but left not for His own Manhood even the solace of a poor cottage; He used His Divine Power to provide bread for thousands in the wilderness, yet He Himself lived scantily on the alms ministered to Him by His disciples. And what were all the At-one-Maker's bodily sufferings to "the travail of His soul,"—a human soul, capable of feeling at least as much as any other soul of man; and perhaps with far greater acuteness and intensity, because, like His Body, united to the GODHEAD. Not once or twice, but

often in the course of His ministry, we see Him afflicted even to tears. "JESUS wept." The impenitence of His people, and their hard-hearted unbelief, drew the tears from His eyes as from men who are moved at extreme ingratitude. He lifted up His eyes to heaven and sighed, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled; showing at a few prominent points the whole form of His inner life of suffering Who hath surely "borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

Yet all these sorrows were but a foretaste of the last, when a world of affliction concentrated in one Man, and ages of grief into the compass of a few short hours. He went forth from the upper chamber to Gethsemane, and then began that terrible Agony with which no suffering of man can bear any comparison. "My soul," said He, "is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." What a fulness of intense sorrow these words contain, and how are they illustrated by that external emotion which anticipated the shedding of His blood upon the Cross. We cannot lay open this mystery of pain, but we can pray with the Church, "By Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat, Good LORD, deliver us."

After this, there came against the sinless One a company of soldiers "with swords and staves as against a thief." They laid hold of Him with violence, Whose word would have summoned "twelve

legions of angels;" they dragged Him—the Judge—unresisting, from one tribunal to another, at the bidding of those who sought, not justice, but His life. Then, even before His unjust condemnation He began to be tortured. As the prophet had said so it fell out, "He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." But even this did not, as the Gentile ruler expected it would, propitiate His enemies; "the voices of the people and of the chief priests prevailed, and they led Him away to be crucified." Now, it was the common practice of the Jews, when they had put the worst sort of criminals to death, to hang their dead bodies on a tree or gallows, and this was accounted a curse under their written law. To an innocent man what a cruel ignominy this would be; but with the holy JESUS it was not disgrace or cruelty enough. They ridiculed Him with the base mockery of royal array, Him Whom they were about to put upon the Cross for His Throne; they opened afresh the wounds of the scourge, and placed upon His head a crown of thorns strong and sharp, which would drive into the flesh like points of iron.

"And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head, and after they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, and put His own robe on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him."

This, now, was the condition of your SAVIOUR. In a few hours' space, He had suffered the Agony and Bloody Sweat; He had been dragged about hither and thither by a persecuting and ungentle crowd; His mind had been tried by the desertion of friends and the insults of foes; His body, already weakened by the pains of the garden, was torn to pieces with scourging; His head pierced with thorns. As He was thus pained and wearied, they put upon His shoulders the heavy load of the Cross, forcing Him onward under its weight towards the walls of the city. There is to this day, a long range of streets in that city, going by the name of the "Via Dolorosa," a street of sorrows. It represents the way wherein JESUS dragged along the heavy burden of the Cross. And it is believed that as He walked therein, the tension of His bodily frame gave way, overcome by grief, weakness, and pain; He sank to the ground, and notwithstanding all the buffetings of the soldiers could carry the Cross no more. Then they found Simon the Cyrenian, and unconscious of the honour they were giving, they caused him to bear one end of the Cross after JESUS his Master, while That weary and wounded Body struggled on sadly under the weight of the other.

"And they led Him away to crucify Him."

Have you ever thought what the crucifixion of the LORD's living body was? If not, realise it now.

Two beams of wood were bound together as a cross, one end of which was sunk into the ground. Then the unclothed Body of the Sufferer was raised by cords or ladders, so that each of His arms could be stretched out on the wood to the extreme length. So extended, great nails were driven through the palms of the hands, and through the feet, and with little or none other support for It, the whole Body was suspended by these wounds. So it was that the executioners did their work upon JESUS; "they pierced My hands and My feet;" and He cried, "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do." For more than six hours did He thus hang, suffering tortures of the Body, which even to think of is pain; and yet more awful sorrows of His soul, into the mystery of which no eye can penetrate. The one wrung not from Him any cry of agony; but the other drew forth those words of unmitigated sadness,—“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” It may be that as the light of the sun was withdrawn, and there was darkness over all the earth for the space of three hours; so this outcry of the holy JESUS was the climax of a mental suffering that had endured for the same period, the loss for three long hours of that comfort in the beatific vision which had hitherto been vouchsafed Him. But, this was the end; once more He was supported by the Presence of His FATHER, and then knowing

that all things were accomplished, His last sigh was uttered—"It is finished," and His words of holy resignation—"FATHER, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." The Good Shepherd had laid down His life for the sheep.

What may we not learn by looking on Him Whom we have pierced? His Cross is the central point around which all the mysteries of our redemption gather. There they find both beginning and end, in Him upon Whom was laid "the chastisement of our peace. Do we gaze on the mercy of God? It is the mercy of the Cross. Do we seek His grace? Where but in the water and the blood which flowed down from the Cross? Before the Justice of God the Cross is our shield; for our own weakness it is an unfailing staff; a sword to withstand the assaults of the Evil one. We carry our prayers to the foot of the Cross, and there—as if Eden were restored, and we could see Him again face to face,—God waits ready and willing to take from its shadow the offerings we bring. It is our stay in life, our peace in the hour of death; it is the token of God the FATHER'S love; of the SON'S unmeasured sympathy; of the HOLY SPIRIT'S sanctifying grace. And as it shows forth the mercy of the Blessed Three in One, it is our all in all, the assurance of eternal peace.

Oh, wonder not that men should place upon altars

and churches, the material Image of the Cross, being what it is, the symbol of all dealings between God in heaven, and men upon earth. Wonder not that men should wear it next their hearts in life, and bid it be carved upon their tombs when their souls are gone to rest. Shall a child cherish the memorial of its mother; or those that have walked together in the bond sanctified by God, shall they use some ring or trinket as a token of consolation, or undying memory; and shall we shun the memorial of our SAVIOUR'S dying Love? Rather, look upon the Cross, and remember it as the finger-post which points out for ever the only road to heaven; look upon it, and call to mind its meaning, that you must put away yourselves and all other earthly trust, and rest alone on the Mercy of God in the Crucified. Take it to you not for any vain imaginings, but to be what it is, the very symbol of Love, and the seal of your peace. Minister to the eye of faith by the outward sense, keeping ever before you, as it were, the last hours of JESUS' suffering love, and learn whenever you look upon the Cross, as if He were before "your eyes *evidently set forth*,¹—crucified among you," that He Who gave you the love of the Cross will never deny any lesser gift to those that ask Him. It will be good for you to kneel down before Him, with this

¹ . . . "Οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη, ἐν ὑμῶν ἐσταυρωμένος."—Galat. iii. 1.

sign of His love before your eyes, that you may think upon His sufferings, remember why it was that He underwent them, and pray that you may be enabled though faintly and at a distance, to imitate His meekness and holy patience. So may you mortify an unchastened spirit, and quicken a feeble habit of devotion.

And, once more, by looking on Him Whom they have pierced, penitent and loving souls may,—learning to know in the heart that “love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge” in the understanding—gain a more perfect apprehension of His sympathy for all human sorrows. For the death of CHRIST not only proved His perfect humanity while upon the Cross; but set a seal, so to speak, upon all His previous life, showing that whatever He had undergone was the real adjunct of a real Incarnation; and His sufferings as truly painful, at the very least, as those of all men. There was a comprehensiveness in His woe which prevents the exclusion of any human trial from His experience:—“In *all* our affliction, He was afflicted.” He was the Very Man of sorrows in Whose Person all sorrows centred. Whatever “grief” belongs to our condition, He was “acquainted with” it; and even the experience of death came upon Him with the utmost accumulation possible of physical pain, and mental anguish. Therefore, as far as the Cross of CHRIST will extend toward, or beyond the limits of all other

crosses, so far is it the measure of His sympathy with those who bear them. It is very common to hear a person say, "Ah, if you had but to undergo what I have, you would learn to feel for me," for it is the instinct of human nature, that sympathy lessens the weight of sorrow. But the utmost sympathy of the dearest friends must necessarily be very limited. Their experience will scarcely agree exactly with our own, and then, it may be where most we need their sympathy, it fails because they cannot penetrate into the remoter depths of our heart. But the Cross has given to our Divine Friend the grasp of all our troubles, trials, and difficulties, stamping with reality the whole of His thirty years' experience of our manhood in body and soul. In all such pains as can result from poverty, or persecution, or the veiling of God's Presence, He went before us, and bore the weight of the Cross. In all our temptations, He bore temptation, His single Person withstanding the whole array of the tempter. And to what seems with our weak and fearful nature the most terrible trial of all we can have, He submitted; that receiving once for all in Himself the "sting of death," its poison might be neutralized for ever. There could be no greater pledge of sympathy than this: "Greater love hath no man," and therefore it is that when we plead His human nature in our prayers, beginning with the complete mystery of the Incarnation, we

lay before Him His "holy Nativity and Circumcision ; His Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation ; His Agony and bloody Sweat ; His Cross and Passion, and His precious Death," knowing that He Who thus so far exceeded our probation, will surely sympathize with us in all time of our tribulation ; in all time of our wealth ; will deliver us in the bitter hour of death ; and be our stay in the day of judgment.

And lastly, the sufferings of the At-one-Maker are a pledge to us of His effectual intercession. He holds up continually, as it were, before the eye of the Divine Justice, the five sacred wounds wherewith He was wounded in the day of His visitation ; He pleads on our behalf, the merits of His passion and His perfect obedience, saying as it were for ever to His FATHER, "a Body hast Thou prepared Me ; lo, I come, to do Thy Will, O My GOD."

Thus may all men look upon Him Whom they have pierced, and behold in His Cross their security, their confidence, their rest. Other rest there cannot be, for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid." He is the one Rock, the one Shield, the one Strength ; the Rock to uphold us when the waterfloods are all around ; the Shield to ward off our foes ; the Strength to bear us up to heaven.

Since then such is the virtue of the Cross, O try to realize a practical knowledge of its length and breadth and all-sufficiency. We have a present

fellowship with His stricken Body that was lifted up ; let us pray Him so to “ draw us to ” Him that we may in the end attain the “ likeness of His glorious Body.” Let the death of the At-one-maker be our life here, and it will in the dark valley, be as the “ everlasting arms under us ” bearing us up through the waves of Jordan ; and at the last when all else is ended, we shall lift up the sign of the Son of Man before the throne of the Judge and say, “ Thou shalt answer for me, O LORD my GOD.” “ O LORD in Thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.”

VII.

THE HUMILIATION OF THE AT-ONE- MAKER'S SOUL.

PSALM xvi. 9, 10.

MY FLESH ALSO SHALL REST IN HOPE, FOR THOU WILT NOT
LEAVE MY SOUL IN HELL, NEITHER WILT THOU SUFFER
THINE HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION.

It was the great principle of our blessed LORD's Incarnation, that His likeness to sinful flesh should fail in no other respect than sin. Being "found in fashion as a man," He became like unto His brethren not only in the outward form and substance of His Body, but also in the inner being of will and understanding which constitute the soul.

Some have said the holy body of JESUS was a living, speaking, and acting body, because of its union with the Divine Nature. But if this had been so, then the At-one-maker would not have been "perfect Man" as well as "perfect God." He would have remained indeed the "express Image" of the "Person" of God, but only a half-formed likeness of sinful flesh. He would have

been like unto His brethren in one respect, but unlike in another, for the "living soul" would have been wanting.

And as the nature of the At-one-maker required that He should have soul as well as body, so also was this made a necessary qualification for the work which He came to accomplish. The soul and body of man had alike been partakers in the fall, and He came to save both; therefore He took to Himself the nature of the one as well as the other, that the whole man might be purified, redeemed, and made capable of restoration to heaven.

We confess this truth at large in the Athanasian Creed, saying that He is "of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting;" and in the Apostles' Creed by words which involve the same meaning, "was buried, and descended into hell." He, that is to say His Body, being taken down from the Cross, was received by "Joseph, a rich man of Arimathæa," and "he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock." "He," that is to say, His Soul, departing from the Body by a voluntary act, "descended into hell." And so, having borne the likeness of sinful flesh for thirty and three years in humiliation and sorrow, He carried it to the grave on the one hand, on the other to the abodes of the bodiless departed.

The burial of the Holy and Undeiled Body is no mystery. On Friday evening Joseph laid it in the tomb, and there it rested inanimate during the whole of Saturday ; all which time, though separate from the soul, it yet remained united, as from the Conception, to the Godhead. Because of this continued union, the body of the Holy One was not suffered to see corruption. We need no cold philosophy to teach us that the natural process of dissolution could not have begun in so short a space,¹ but must rather believe that since there was no separation of the two natures of CHRIST even in the grave, ages could no more have turned that Flesh to dust than a single day. Because the Body of JESUS was joined to the Divine nature, therefore it was an "Holy Thing,"² and it was "not possible" that God's "Holy One" could be "holden of death,"³ or see that "corruption" which ensues in all that are holden of it.

But although in its incorruptibility, the dead body of the Man JESUS differed from the dead bodies of all other men, it was clearly like them in this, that it reposed for a time apart from the living soul. When He had cried, "It is finished," He gave up the ghost ; His soul departed, and His body hung upon the Cross soulless, "dead," and fit for the

¹ A theory untenable in connection with obvious local circumstances, as indicated in S. John xi. 39.

² S. Luke i. 35.

³ Acts ii. 24.

grave. Whither then did the separate soul of the At-one-maker depart? The Church tells us that "It descended into hell." And one chief authority on which she founds this dogma is the passage already quoted from the sixteenth Psalm, of which S. Peter said, "David . . . being a prophet, spake of the resurrection of CHRIST, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption."¹ For these words speak, not of a dispensation by which the soul of the Holy One was exempted from the common lot of all souls; they are not "Thou shalt not suffer My soul to go thither," but "Thou shalt not *leave*" it there, where for a season it will depart. Thus the invisible things of faith are made sure to us by the HOLY GHOST on a two-fold foundation, the prophecy going before, the confirmation afterwards by the mouth of an Apostle.

Moreover, as we have certain proof in the words of our LORD Himself after His resurrection, that in this wondrous period of separation between His soul and Body, the former had not yet ascended to heaven;² so it may be said that there is no indication of its immediate removal to the place of rest. He said indeed to the thief upon the cross, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," but as He absolved the penitent by the power of His Godhead, so it was the Omnipresence of His Godhead, not

¹ Acts ii. 31.

² St. John xx. 17.

His local presence in soul or body, that He promised when He said, "Thou shalt be with Me."¹

The soul of JESUS did not therefore ascend from the Cross to Heaven, neither did It go at once to the blessed region of Paradise, but it "descended into hell." And this it did in the natural course of His humanity. For when He "became Man, and was made in all things like unto His brethren," He was like not only to His holy brethren the Saints of GOD, as Moses and Elias, but like humanity in general, as it was by the fall. And this personification of mankind was followed up from one step to another that a certain specific object might be attained; that as the SON of GOD had condescended to the likeness of our sinful flesh, so we might be again exalted to the "Image of GOD," which was the type of our first creation. As then it was His loving will to raise us up on high, so must He descend to the lowest abyss of the fall, that His Manhood might lay hold on ours. And that lowest deep was hell, the place of just retribution for all who were or should be accounted sinners before GOD; the place where all mankind must have gone,—for who is not accounted a sinner,—except the Atonement, stretching backward, by anticipation, as well as forward to our day and all that shall come after, had rescued the souls of men

¹ S. Aug. Hom. cxi. 2.

from the due of their sin, and given them a place of rest.

The nature and office of the At-one-maker ever going together therefore, the soul of JESUS became like to the souls of men even in this, that it descended to that place whither the fall had impelled their course, and whither, unchecked by His Atone-ment, they must inevitably have gone.

Nevertheless it must be remembered that the likeness between fallen man and our LORD JESUS CHRIST had, of necessity, certain limits which could not be overpassed. He was like us as far as it was possible for Him to be like, but there are some points in which He was unlike, because, although they are consistent with our nature as it now is, they are utterly inconsistent with the immaculate nature of the Lamb of God. He was like us in that He had body and soul, He was unlike in that His body and soul were absolutely sinless. He was like us in that "He was numbered with the transgressors," suffering as sinners do in this life; He was unlike in that, although reckoned among transgressors, He was not one of them, suffering for sins which He had never committed. He was like us in that He descended to the lowest abyss of the fall, He was unlike in that He could there suffer no torment or pain. As the Three Children walked unharmed through the "burning fiery furnace" of Babylon, because there was a

Fourth with them "like unto the SON of GOD," so the soul of JESUS descended into hell, and yet hell could not hurt Him, because that soul was joined to the Godhead even there. It was a part of His Atonement that He should be like all men, even like men lost in the fall; like all men, yet without sin, like man lost in the fall, yet without punishment; but because in Him the fallen were to rise again, and the lost to be saved, therefore He was able to say, even from the deep, "Thou shalt not leave My soul in hell."¹

¹ Whatever beyond this was the object of our LORD's temporary sojourn in the place appointed for lost souls, is not so plainly revealed in the Holy Bible as to be stated in any present formula of the Church of England, although in the first edition of the XXXIX Articles, a reference was made to the often quoted passage of S. Peter which speaks of His preaching to the spirits in prison. I have, however, thought it as well to condense into the form of a note, two considerations in addition to those stated in the text, which may tend to relieve the minds of some who find it difficult to accept in its simplicity this Article of the Faith.

1. Sin is, as it seems probable, its own punishment in the unseen world; so that, as regards a future state, sin and torment are what are technically called "convertible terms:" or in plainer words, sin, often pleasing in this life, is ever torment in the next; and torment is unrepented sin. If this be so, then a soul pure from sin, can no more be capable of torment, than an incombustible substance can be consumed by fire. And such a soul was that of CHRIST, "harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" if not separate from sinners in the pain of probation, yet altogether separate in the pain of punishment.

2. It does not seem to rest on any Scriptural authority that hell

So far we trace the blessed At-one-maker's work in the rescue of our manhood from the deserved pains of hell. But the separation of His body and soul reveals to us another fact with reference to our own nature, the life of our souls between death and the resurrection. The Holy One died as we die, His body was laid in the grave even as our bodies are laid there; His soul departed from it to live elsewhere for a time, and after that to be joined again to His body in the resurrection. As therefore He followed the natural course of humanity in all visible particulars, so in the separate existence of His soul we must regard Him as a type of manhood in things unseen.

When indeed death has done its work upon us, this "earthly tabernacle" begins to be "dissolved," and before long "the dust returns to the earth as it was." It was not so with JESUS, for on Him rested

was, as CHRIST descended into it, or is even now, the abode of *devils* as well as of lost souls. We know from the instance of Dives in the parable, that lost souls are already "in hell, being in torment;" but yet all the descriptions of the Last Judgment appear to indicate some fearful addition of pain, when the souls of the wicked shall be re-united to their bodies. It seems that they shall then be "cast into the lake of fire, with the Devil and his angels." And if only at that future time this fearful companionship in torment is to be established, then it would seem to be revealed to us that the soul of our blessed LORD descended among lost souls, but not to the place of "the Devil and his angels."

not the curse, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;" yet there is thus much analogy between His death and ours, that our souls and bodies are separated for a time, longer or shorter, and that the resurrection is their re-union. And moreover, though this re-union came to pass in CHRIST within three days from the separation, while ours will be only at His second coming to judge the world, yet in our case, as in His, the time of waiting is a time of life. "One day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The one day of JESUS, and the thousand years of mankind are alike within the power of God.

From Him then, the Type of our manhood, we may believe this to be the condition of all the dead; that whether they are the holy dead, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; or the unholy, as Balaam and Judas; their bodies are in the dust of the grave, senseless, decayed, dissolved, their souls living and conscious in a separate state. All are awaiting that Great Day for which other days are but a preparation; and until that Day dawn, so far as we can see beyond the veil, none shall have arisen from the grave, no soul of the righteous have taken its place in heaven, nor any soul of the lost have reached that full consummation of torment to which it will be consigned in the "second death."¹

¹ This is spoken of the generality of mankind. Enoch and

Since then the souls of the departed do not sink into unconsciousness when their bodies are committed to the ground, and since every individual person will probably continue to think, reflect, and feel for a longer period between death and the resurrection, than during the longest life of man on earth; surely that middle portion of our continuous life is one, which, apart from our probation, is of as great interest to us as the life we are now living, scarcely less than the life beyond the Judgment; and we are unwise if we neglect to learn what we can concerning it.

And although we have only, as it were, the outline of the picture given us in our LORD's descent into hell, its details are in some measure filled in by that parable, or circumstantial history, which seems to have been narrated with a special view to our instruction as to the state of the dead. We are there told that Lazarus "died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;" afterwards "the rich man also died and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." In this are pictured two states beyond this present life, the one of the

Elijah cannot but be regarded as beyond the pale of all general conclusions, and so also, perhaps, may those "saints" whose "bodies arose," and "appeared unto many" at the time of our blessed LORD's resurrection,

good man whose soul has gone to dwell with the souls of the saints, the other that of the unrepenting sinner, whose soul has gone to live in a condition of insupportable pain. And in these two states must be comprehended the whole race of men from the days of Adam until now.¹

As regards the punishment of the sinner, while he is waiting for the Judgment of the Last Day, we have no exact revelation in Holy Scripture. We know indeed from the parable in question that it is a misery unequalled by any misery of earth; and that woeful as it is, it is unmitigated by the hope of any change for the better, the only prospect being that of a still more wretched state, "with the Devil and his angels" after the Judgment.

It also appears to be indicated that what was the sinner's enjoyment on earth will be the source of his miserable woe after death, so that the intemperate man's gratifications will turn to the craving in vain for a drop of cold water; the libertine's pleasures to his agony. And even these indications of the disembodied soul's sufferings in hell, are fully enough (if we saw no more beyond) to show us "the terrors of the LORD," and to teach us that "there is no repentance in the grave whither thou goest."

But though the wrath of God is in His mercy only partially unveiled, He has given us clear re-

¹ See note on page 91.

velations of the love which He bears to us in the Atonement. And so the state of souls who have departed hence in the LORD is far more plainly set before us. Thus the typical repose of Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham assures us that when God takes the souls of His loved ones away from earth, He takes them from a state of toil to one of rest, from suffering to peace. "I heard a Voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, from henceforth, blessed are the dead which die in the LORD; even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours."¹ In one sense they are "the dead" because they are "absent from the body," in another and better, they are the living, for they are "present with the LORD." For that they who depart in the LORD, rest in the light and joy of His presence we know from His gracious words to the dying penitent upon the cross, "This day shalt Thou be with Me in Paradise."

There can be imagined no higher blessedness for the spiritual man upon earth, than for him to live and dwell in the consciousness of his LORD's continual Presence. This is the end of all private devotions and public worship, of sacraments and self-discipline, retirement and meditation. But the holiest life is broken up by cares and duties, and weakness of faith. The very circumstances of our present being hinder us from keeping our gaze fixed

¹ Rev. xiv. 13.

without wavering upon the Cross of CHRIST, and resting on JESUS alone. Yet what we do realize here of the Presence of the LORD is, in its measure, a foretaste of that rest with Him which remaineth for His elect as the special joy of paradise. And accordingly our highest expressions respecting the happiness of the faithful dead all resolve themselves into this, that "they do live with Him after they are departed from their earthly tabernacles." Into His hands we commend their souls at the hour of death, "as into the hands of a faithful CREATOR and most merciful SAVIOUR," believing it to be their greatest joy until the resurrection dawn that they are as he "whom the LORD loved" in the days of His flesh, "resting on JESUS' bosom."

All the bitterness of death has therefore passed away in the humiliation of JESUS' soul, and "there remaineth . . . a rest for the people of GOD." In Him the sting of death was drawn, and the victory of the grave turned into a defeat; "Thou shalt not leave My soul in hell, neither shalt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." And so they who depart in Him are said less to die than to "sleep in JESUS," and to "rest from their labours," and to be with Him Who is "the life" in the blissful fold of paradise.

Let not any say that this doctrine, though not

speculative, is yet one of little practical moment to Christians. At the best the prospect of death is painful. David said, "My heart is disquieted within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me:"¹ and such doubtless are the words or thought of many a one whose conscience is too tender to be lulled into complacency. Even as it is, no Christian can come to the borders of the dark valley, and fail to remember that he is going to meet his Judge face to face. But fearful as the prospect of it is, and ever must be, how much more terrible would it have been, if a dark cloud had hung over all the space that lies between the soul's departure and its final re-union with the body; the end of this life, and the beginning of the judgment. What if there had been no present hope, but only a dull blank of centuries? Then, even to the departing saint, death would have been unwelcome to most of us, full of "an horrible dread overwhelming us." But now Gospel light reveals to us the way of the future, and instead of an uncertain, dreary waiting, we see rest in the LORD, that rest, the blessedness of which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man"² to conceive; and they who have lived in union with the Holy One on earth, partaking in toil and weakness of His sufferings, may long in some measure,

¹ Ps. lv. 4.

² 1 Cor. ii. 9.

even as S. Paul, for the time to come when they may give up their corruptible body into the hand of its Maker, that their soul may "depart and be with CHRIST."

It would, indeed, be a very false kind of consolation, to believe in this middle life of rest, if we had any ground of expectation that as soon as death has done his work upon the faithful, they enter upon the full joys of heaven. It is true that we have accustomed ourselves to the use of conventional expressions, which sound as if we believed that the faithful departed are already "gone" as we say "to glory;" had already entered on the inheritance of the New Jerusalem. But the great Sabbath which lies between the death and resurrection of our blessed LORD is a standing memorial to us, that however high our hopes may rise, they may not look for the whole bliss of heaven until soul and body reunite in the general resurrection. As the Holy One Himself waited for that re-union, so must we; and they who are gone before are now waiting also, that "they without us may not be made perfect" in heaven. This truth therefore, so far from being unpractical, is a most blessed source of consolation to the faithful, assuring them that their necessary waiting after death is not a time of unconsciousness or sorrow, but of sleep in the LORD. We are sure now, not only of a blessed resurrection at the last day, when the Bridegroom

shall call upon His own to enter into the joy of their LORD ; but we know that in the meanwhile the spirits of the just will dwell in His Presence, and partake of spiritual delights in a measure that never before came to their lot. This life is to all Christians, in a greater or less degree like the life of their Head. All who would partake of His love must take up His Cross and follow Him. Such as it was, therefore, to Him to enter into His rest, such in a relative proportion is it to them. His soul was “weary of life,” His Body bowed down with affliction ; what a change must it have been for the holy JESUS, from the passion of Good Friday to the rest of Easter Even ! So will it be,—let us speak reverently—with many of His disciples, from those who suffered the shocks of a persecuting world, and the pains of martyrdom, to us whose chief sorrows are the pains of disease, or the perils of temptation. As our At-one-maker laid down His Cross, and “entered into His rest,” so may those who are partakers of His Atonement enter into the blessed land of Paradise where “the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.” Here, the kingdom of this world has yet a hold upon them ; there will be only the kingdom of the LORD and of His CHRIST. Here the flesh drags to sin, and the “corruptible body presseth down the soul ;” there the “body of this death” will have been put aside, to be retaken

only when transfigured into the "likeness of the Heavenly." Here, the adversary of GOD and man is for ever laying out fresh snares; there his power will have no range. The burden of the Cross will have been laid down; and the warfare of life changed into a "patient waiting for the LORD."

Some are there already. The olden Church that looked for a rest in the bosom of Abraham, has found it in the bosom of CHRIST. They are resting there whose names are to us as household words, Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, and Confessors, whose earthly joys were few, save the joy of their Master's love. They laboured and suffered, and now they rest. And with them there are some whom we have known more than by name; they walked with us awhile on earth, and we loved them as our own kind and kindred; they rest now in Paradise, and we may love them with reverential joy, as we love the holy angels. All these live in the light of the At-one-maker's visible Presence; we, by GOD's grace are joined in the same fellowship by His Presence invisible in His Church and Sacraments; and so while they are waiting in the spirit, and we in the body making ready for our departure, we are linked together in one chain which reaches from heaven to paradise, and from thence to the Church Militant on earth.

What better desire can we have than to be, as

they are, "with CHRIST?" Only for the sabbath of paradise to end in the never fading joys of the heavenly Easter, that when we awake up after His likeness we may be satisfied with it.

VIII.

THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THE NEW CREATION.

S. JOHN xiv. 19.

BECAUSE I LIVE, YE SHALL LIVE ALSO.

As seedtime is to harvest, so is the Atonement of our LORD JESUS CHRIST to the resurrection of the faithful. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."¹ He Who spake these words was Himself the corn of wheat, and the Church of the unseen world is the fruit ripening in Him. So are we who in ourselves are less than nothing, led to hope for all things in the unity of CHRIST'S Mystical Body.

It is on account of this essential principle that the doctrine of the Atoner's resurrection holds so prominent a place in the teaching of the holy Apostles. "If CHRIST be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen

¹ S. John xii. 24.

asleep in CHRIST are perished.”¹ All our hopes of salvation and immortality went down into the grave with Him, as our hopes of the harvest are buried with the seed corn in the furrow ; our life is bound up with His life, and therefore, by necessity, with His resurrection from the dead.

I. And this is true, in the first place, of our spiritual life on this side the grave. For except we are born again in CHRIST, we are still merely the children of Adam ; and “in Adam all die” the death, not of the body alone, but also that eternal death, whatever it may be, which is the curse entailed on original sin. Now such spiritual death, if it be nothing more, is alienation from GOD ; and by consequence, spiritual life is being in a state of reconciliation to Him. And because our reconciliation is wrought and maintained by the “one Mediator between GOD and man,” Who in His Mediatorial Person becomes an ever living Intercessor, therefore it is that our spiritual life has its beginning and end in the life of CHRIST. If He had not risen from the dead “now to appear in the presence of GOD for us,” then we should still have been lying under the unrepealed curse of the fall, “yet in our sins.”

Again, the great work of the Atonement was to overthrow the power of sin, that power which, unvanquished, could bring about the perdition of all

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 17, 18.

the sons of Adam. But when, in the course of His Manhood, the At-one-maker went to the utmost limits of man's humiliation, death, the grave, and hell; where would have been the victory, except these had been succeeded by His glorious resurrection, and the leading captivity captive? So far then the very foundation of Christianity, our restoration from the fall, rests on the doctrine of our LORD's resurrection, because it rests on the necessity of a victorious and ever living CHRIST.

II. But, secondly, and more especially in our present investigation, we must understand the words "Because I live, ye shall live also," not only of the victory gained over sin in our reconciliation to God, but also of the final victory over death, the grave, and hell, in our accession to a state of bliss. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," saith the LORD. "I will ransom thee from the power of the grave, I will redeem thee from death; O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."¹

Now the Atoner Himself arose from the dead, because, having in Him by His Godhead an inalienable principle of life, "it was not possible that He should be holden of" death.² He willed that His holy body should be separated from His soul, but it neither was nor could be any more separated from His Divine nature; and when by His descent into hell He had laid

¹ Hosea xiii. 14.

² Acts ii. 24.

hold of the lowest depths of our fallen manhood, then the will of His Godhead united body and soul together again; and His reappearance among men assured them of the truth contained in His own words, "I have power to lay down" My life, "and I have power to take it again."¹ When therefore He said, "Because I live," His words are such as those of the Evangelist, "In Him was life,"² and they were meant to convey the truth which He taught at other times when He said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life;"³ "As the FATHER hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the SON to have life in Himself."⁴ And as often as He alluded to the resurrection of the faithful dead, He named it as a consequence flowing from the life which is inherent in Him. He bade men look to Him ever, as He led Martha to look to Him at the tomb of Lazarus, and to believe in Him as the Life of all who live, the Resurrection of all who rise to life everlasting.

Nor was this all; for as He declared His quickening power to be inherent in Himself, through His union in one Godhead with the FATHER, so did He reveal the principle of union with Himself as the source of resurrection and life in His people. What it was to "live in" Him, He had sufficiently shown

¹ S. John x. 18.

² S. John i. 4.

³ S. John xi. 25.

⁴ S. John v. 26.

at other times, and now He said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." That is, "though he were dead, yet shall he live." And the reason of this is, that whosoever is incorporated with CHRIST by a living union, continues so even after death if they die still united to Him by acts of faith; and as the Head has already risen, and is "alive for evermore," so it cannot but be that the members must follow, and live because they are joined to His life.

The resurrection of our LORD and SAVIOUR is therefore prolonged and extended, so to speak, to become the resurrection of all who are baptized into His mystical body, and depart out of this world in union with Him. Hence His resurrection is the true source and original, of which all others will be in their degree parts and copies; and from the knowledge of His, we have a light thrown upon our own.

And the first point that would be noticed by a thoughtful mind is the perfect identity of the person of JESUS before and after His resurrection. This was a fact so wonderful and seemingly improbable to those who had yet no clear understanding of the "resurrection of the body," that the Apostles were only led to a perfect conviction of it by a gradual re-assertion of our LORD's Manhood and Godhead. He was made known to them first by the recognition

of His love. His sheep know His voice, and He calleth them by their name. So in the garden He said, "Mary," and in the upper chamber, "Peace be unto you." He revealed Himself in the breaking of bread as the same JESUS Who had given them the tokens of His love on the eve of the Passover, saying, "This is My Body." "This is My Blood." He convinced them, still probably doubting the reality of what they saw,—because His glorified body passed in and out uncontrolled by the laws of corporeal substance,—that He was not merely the Spirit of JESUS, but the very Man in body and soul Who had been nailed to the Cross, and had cried, "FATHER, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." And by the evidence of a wondrous miracle in which He displayed His providential power over the natural world, they were taught that the perfect Man was still the perfect God. In all this it was shown that He Who had risen the third day from the dead, was in person, and power, and love, the very JESUS, Who had been taken down from the Cross and laid in the cave of the rock, He Who came down from heaven, was Incarnate, and made Man.

Now what do we learn respecting ourselves, from this truth of our LORD's perfect identity? We learn this, that the resurrection of Christians will be no more a change of person than that of their Head. As it was with CHRIST the first-fruits, so will it be

with "them who are CHRIST's at His coming"—every "man in his own order." Such as our bodies and souls are now, such as they are known to our brethren, and such as they are known to ourselves, even such will they arise when the word shall be given, "come forth," and they re-unite in the kingdom of the resurrection. And by this simple truth we may set our minds at rest concerning all speculations whether or not we shall know and be known in heaven. For if there be perfect sameness of person, can we fail of recognition?

But with this identity of the Atoner's person there was one point of difference in Him. He went down to the grave that which He had been all the days of His earthly tarrying, the "Man of sorrows." He rose again, no longer in a state of humiliation or suffering, but in that same exalted Manhood which now dwells in heaven. His soul had been smitten with grief, His holy Body bruised and broken, but though He had learned human sympathies by the way of human sorrows, and though the prints of the Cross yet proclaimed the Atoner to all ages, the resurrection had wrought this change even in the blessed JESUS, that "sorrow and sighing" were "done away."¹ So each who partakes in the Atoner's resurrection, shall also partake, in his own order, of His Exaltation. "This corruptible must

¹ Isaiah xxxv. 10.

put on incorruption, this mortal put on immortality," and though each of the redeemed will carry with him to heaven a perfect identity parallel to that of his REDEEMER, there will be a difference with us as with Him, dishonour will be changed into glory, weakness into power, the natural into the spiritual, the "image of the earthy" into the "image of the Heavenly."

It is good for us ever to keep in view the reality and consequences of that oneness which is the end of our blessed SAVIOUR's Atonement; and to remember that sacramental union is no figure or parable, but the means by which a real spiritual incorporation is begun in us at holy baptism, and extended to the resurrection. All we have and are, all we shall or can be in the kingdom of GOD, is only what we can have or be as members of CHRIST. Our very being in that kingdom is because we are joined to Him in the new birth; if we are strong, it is because He is working in us; if we live, because He lives. We are reconciled through union with the One Mediator between us and GOD; we are justified by His merits supplying our deficiencies; we are sanctified by the drawing closer of our bond with Him; we shall be glorified hereafter because in the glorious lifting up of the First-fruits, all parts of His mystical Body are made partakers in the harvest. Does not all this teach us to look away from ourselves, renouncing all idea of separate existence in the king-

dom of God, and confessing that whatever hope we have, is such hope as belongs to members of CHRIST, made one with Him in life, in death, and in the resurrection? Why do all “die *in Adam*?” Can it be merely that the moral consequences of his sin are in the justice of God’s wrath poured out upon all the children of the first sinner; or is it not rather because his fallen nature is conveyed from generation to generation through our natural union with him. Why is it that “*in CHRIST*,” the second Adam, all shall “be made alive?” Why; but because by a spiritual union with Him we become partakers spiritually of His perfection, as we were naturally of the other’s imperfection.

It was an assured conviction of this, that they were bound to their living Head by ties which death could not sever, that led the Apostles and those who lived in the early light of Gospel tradition to look forward with so much calmness to death; for if they had an assurance of anything, it was the “sure and certain hope of the resurrection.” Even their common language concerning death was taken from the lips of their LORD and Master; as they said of S. Stephen that he “fell asleep,” so had JESUS spoken beforehand of His “friend Lazarus.” When the saints of God departed out of sight, it was not the custom of their friends to speak of them gloomily and despondingly,—‘such an one is dead;’ but rather

with a tender reverence and thankfulness 'he is asleep in JESUS.' They knew that CHRIST was risen, and therefore that those who were in Him at the hour of their departure, had by no means perished; they knew that He had become the First-fruits, and so they waited patiently for the ingathering; looking forward to it in strong faith, and saying, "If we believe that JESUS CHRIST died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in JESUS will GOD bring with Him." From these habits of faithful days we have learned to call the grave-yards of departed Christians by the Christian name of "cemeteries," the "sleeping-places" of those who have died in the LORD; the houses of rest where their bodies await that day when He shall say of each of them, as He did of Lazarus, "I go to awake him out of sleep."

Too often we accustom ourselves to look only on the terrors of death. Fear it, indeed, we all must, even the holiest; but the fear of death could not fail of being softened, if we dwelt with more earnest faith on our incorporation with "the Life." If He dwell in us, and we in Him, what other safeguard do we need? What so great danger is there against which His indwelling is not a pledge of protection and deliverance? Though "the sorrows of death" compass us round about, over all there is the girding and support of the "everlasting arms," and that should suffice us. In the consciousness of this, the

Church, mindful of her children in the hour of their last trial, offers to the dying the blessed Body and Blood of their LORD, that they may not fail of His Presence when their need of it is greatest; that He being in them Who triumphed over death and sin, they may not want for a Guard and Comforter in the dark passage from one life to another. He sojourns in the dying, Who is the Resurrection, that they also may rise in Him; He lives in the dying, Who is the Life, that they may "live also."

And when she "buries her dead out of her sight," the Church lingers but for a moment on the threshold of the grave—lingers for a moment to give the living a word of warning, to bid them to fear and penitence,—and then raises her voice to tell of things beyond death and the dissolving flesh, the rest of Paradise, the joys of the resurrection, and the glorified body in heaven. She bids the mourners remember that they who sleep in JESUS are not perished if JESUS be risen from the dead. She lays them down in their resting places, not as if all their joys were cut off, but as looking onward "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST." And then in solemn strains of joy she proclaims, "Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD." And when with these hopes and assurances we leave the bodies of our loved ones locked up in the grave, trusting that their souls are

departed to be with CHRIST in Paradise; when we remember that so it was with Him, and that after His appointed time of waiting, the sinless Body and Soul were joined together again in a glorious resurrection; surely in the midst of our tears, we feel it must be better they should be thus, awaiting the time when all His elect shall be made like Him, than that they should have lingered longer among sorrows, weakness, and temptation. Our mourning is chastened, for “we sorrow not as men without hope.”

And for ourselves who yet stay, such thoughts teach a present and personal interest in the LORD’S resurrection, making us to know that we have already within us the seeds of that glorious life which we hope to share with Him and His, in that “other country” which we seek, “even an heavenly.” Seeing therefore that if we “live” at all now, we live in the LORD JESUS, and knowing that if we are His, none can pluck us out of His hand, let us pray for this above all other things, that when the rest of Paradise is over, and His angels are gathering together His elect from the four winds of heaven, we may be found among the number of those who “fell asleep in JESUS;” that being once and for ever united to His blessed Body, ours also may rise to the life immortal, that where He is, there we may be also.

IX.

THE EXALTATION OF THE AT-ONE-MAKER.

S. JOHN xvi. 16.

A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL NOT SEE ME: AND AGAIN,
A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL SEE ME, BECAUSE I GO
TO THE FATHER.

WHEN the disciples heard these words, they seem to have been startled more by the seeming contradiction which they contained, than by their mystery; they “shall not see” their Master, and yet they “shall see” Him, and in each case because He was going to the FATHER. But to us who read them by the light that was afterwards shed abroad on the Church, the apparently contradictory nature of the two propositions is easily explained, and both clearly reconciled with the dispensation of faith in which we now walk. “A little while,”—rather more than forty days—and they who looked on JESUS with their bodily eyes, should look on Him no more, because He was going whither they could not follow Him, though they should follow Him hereafter. Again,

after the same "little while" of forty days or more, they would see Him with the eye of faith, working that continual Intercession, whereby He is revealed as the Man CHRIST JESUS to these latter ages, as much as He was to the Apostles before the days of the Cross. Because He was going to the FATHER, He could not be seen any longer by the bodily eyes of those to whom His visible Presence had become familiar. Because He was going to the FATHER, the benefits of His Presence should be manifestly given to the many, even as if the eyes of all the faithful rested upon His Person.¹

Thus did the Shepherd comfort His flock, when He was about to be taken away. He had led them with a loving and tender hand, and fed them in the pastures of life, and their eyes had been gradually opened to realize the full benefit of His Presence in the flesh; and now He bade them "let not" their "hearts be troubled" at the removal of this unspeakable blessing, for great as it was, He had yet greater

¹ The words in question are sometimes interpreted of our LORD's death, soon to ensue, when His disciples should lose sight of Him, and His resurrection, when they should see Him for a "little while" again. But, besides that this interpretation cannot be properly reconciled with the latter part of the verse, "*because I go to the FATHER;*" it is also discountenanced by the word "again" which certainly is used as in S. Matt. xiii. 44, 45, in a continuative or recapitulatory sense, and not in connection with any idea of time;—"again I say," &c., not "another little while."

in store for them. "It is expedient for you that I go away." My ascension to heaven will take away from you some things that you have hitherto enjoyed; but it will gain you others which will fully compensate for their loss.

The same truth, He also set before them in His last words when the visible Ascension of His Human Nature was about to take place; "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." His Manhood was even then on the point of removal to heaven, yet would it dwell with them always and everywhere, through its union with the omnipresent Godhead; with them, because in them was represented the whole Church of God in every place and time; and for ever, because the Church should endure after they as individuals had moved away from earth; endure even to the second coming of the Son of Man.

It is therefore of the Human Nature of the God-Man that these words speak: "A little while, and ye shall not see Me" in outward form; "A little while, and ye shall see Me" in spiritual Presence.

Now to understand this truth perfectly we must first come to a clear view of our blessed LORD's Ascension, as a real translation of His risen Flesh from earth to heaven. At His Resurrection a certain change had passed over His holy body, so that from a natural, it had become a spiritual body, no longer subject to the ordinary laws of matter. But though

this mysterious change had so soon taken place in Him, which will one day ensue in all His elect, the change had no more destroyed His identity, than that of a sick man is destroyed by his restoration to health; and therefore the glorified Body which ascended into heaven, was the same which in a state of humiliation had hung upon the Cross. This is a matter almost less of faith, than of historical evidence. Born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the SON of GOD took to Himself such a body as all men have, save that it had not the defect of original sin. In that body, as it increased in age and stature, He was known to those who dwelt around, while He was “subject” to His parents; and when He was “about His FATHER’S business,” He was still recognized as the “son of Joseph,” by those who knew nothing of His Divine and immaculate parentage. Then,—to come from the multitude to the little flock—during the whole of His ministry,—for three years,—He walked familiarly with the holy Apostles, going in and out among them, and personally known to all, as well as each was known to the others. They traced Him through all His sufferings until He was shut from their sight in the sealed tomb. And after His Resurrection, by many appearances, and by proofs called in Holy Scripture “infallible,”¹ He certified to their astonished minds that He was the

¹ Acts i. 3.

same JESUS in body, soul, and Godhead, Whom they had known so long, and so well. When they were perfectly assured of this identity, and familiarized with it by frequent intercourse during a space of forty days, then, but not till then, "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up to heaven."¹ Not long after this, the holy martyr Stephen, (who had probably known the LORD as well as other disciples,) exclaimed in the midst of his agony, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of GOD."² It was the form of the Son of Man on which he had often looked before till It had become familiar to his sight.

Thus the fact of our SAVIOUR'S Ascension as set forth by the Church out of Holy Scripture, amounts to this:—that He ascended not in Spirit only, but in the "substance of His Mother," Which was born in the world, and "crucified under Pontius Pilate;" that He sat down at the right hand of the FATHER, not as GOD alone, but as the GOD-MAN; that His Human Nature was not absorbed in, but joined with, that Godhead Which He had from "the beginning," when "the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD." The facts established, we are led to most

¹ S. Luke xxiv. 50.

² Acts vii. 56.

significant and important truths following from them :—

I. First, the exaltation of our nature in the Person of CHRIST, has originated a capacity for its exaltation in ourselves. The original defect and corruption of the Fall, involve the absolute necessity of our Atoner's bodily Presence in heaven. The sin of Adam wrought a change in his nature, a change in body and soul, so that from being pure, holy, and undying, he became impure, actively sinful, and mortal. And because that which is begotten is born in the likeness of its parent, the whole nature of every one derived from the first sinner has inherited the sinner's defect and the consequence of it. If then our manhood by becoming unsanctified was made unfit to dwell in the earthly garden of bliss, how much more in heaven. So that the Fall wrought this change in the whole nature of the whole human race, that it was made incapable of existence in those purer and higher regions which before constituted its natural element.

But the second Adam, by taking our nature upon Him caused a fresh change to pass over it, which change, as the former, was capable of transmission to others. By uniting it with His own immaculate purity, He made that holy which before was only vile; and that all mankind might be spiritually reproduced in the same sanctified nature, He ordained

means in the Sacraments by which every one born naturally in the corrupt likeness of the first Adam, may be supernaturally linked to the glorified Manhood of the second Adam; that as our nature has fallen from heaven by derivation from the one, it may be raised thither again by derivation from the other.

Thus He Who was the First-fruits of the resurrection became also the First-fruits of the exaltation. "I go," said He, "to prepare a place for you that where I am, there ye may be also."¹ Therefore we enter into the holiest—that is heaven—by a "new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."² He is the Forerunner of mankind, exalted to His FATHER'S right hand, not for Himself alone, but also for us, that all the sanctified may follow their Forerunner within the veil, and appear in the presence of GOD. As GOD has quickened men together with CHRIST, raising them from death and sin by virtue of His rising Who said, "I am the Resurrection," so has He given them to "sit together in heavenly places" by virtue of His exaltation Who said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Lifted up to the Cross, He draws all men by the cords of love, from the world to the Church; lifted up to the throne of majesty, He draws all His

¹ S. John xiv. 2, 3.

² Heb. x. 20.

elect on high, that where the Head is, there the body may be also.

II. For in the next place, the love of the Atoner did not rest in preparing a place for our fallen nature beside pure unfallen angels in the presence of God. What He has made possible by His nature as Mediator, He does also actually effect by His work as Intercessor. And this present work of Atonement, being that of His priesthood, prayer and sacrifice, it is wrought by the human nature of the God-Man. He Who made manhood At-one with God by His Incarnation and Sacrifice, He Who sanctified manhood by carrying it up to heaven, the same now ever liveth to finish the work He has begun, by interceding with the FATHER on the one hand for the pardon which our sins yet make necessary, by applying to us individually, on the other, the benefits of His whole Atonement. "This Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. . Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."¹

Now, He Who makes intercession for us, must of necessity be as much man as He Who died upon the Cross. For a main part of intercession is prayer offered to God by one person on behalf of another

¹ Heb. vii. 24.

and our very reason teaches us that GOD, Who can receive nothing, but only give, does not intercede by prayer. This wonderful truth is therefore to be believed of our LORD JESUS CHRIST in heaven, that while, as GOD, He is the giver of all good and perfect gifts, as a human Intercessor He is asking and receiving gifts¹ such as GOD only can bestow,—gifts of grace and absolution.

Further, respecting this present office of the At-one-maker, Holy Scripture teaches us to draw an analogy from the high priesthood of the Jewish Church. And as the most important and essential function of the high priest was exercised upon the great day of atonement, it is to this we are chiefly directed. On that day, after offering a sacrifice for his own sins, that, being absolved from them, he might be a more perfect type of the sinless Atoner, the high priest ascended from the place where he commonly ministered, to the most holy part of the temple,—separated from all the rest by the veil,—where was the mercy-seat, and where GOD was pleased in an especial manner to manifest the glory of His presence. The HOLY GHOST teaches us by the Apostle S. Paul, that this going up of the high priest was intended by GOD to symbolize the ascension of our great and eternal High Priest to heaven; the one appearing for a time before His earthly

¹ Psalm lxviii. 18.

mercy-seat, the Other interceding at His throne above for ever, "For CHRIST is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of GOD for us."¹ And, as the symbolical intercession was made with an offering of blood, so has the "High Priest for ever" carried to the everlasting Mercy-seat that blessed Sacrifice which He offered upon the Cross; Himself being both the Priest and the Offering, the Atoner and the Lamb of GOD. Because, moreover, the Priest is "for ever after the order of Melchizedek," and "in the midst of the throne the Lamb as it had been slain," therefore we know that the intercession of CHRIST is a perpetual Sacrifice, begun indeed upon the Cross, but offered up "once for all," that is, extending itself to every age and in every place, doing that which typical sacrifices could not do, "making the comers thereunto perfect," feeding the saints of GOD, "and leading them to living fountains of waters."² "Having through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to GOD for this cause," our Atoner "is the Mediator of the New Testament ever making intercession for us," pleading the wounds of His Cross against the wrath of GOD.

Moreover in the Intercession of CHRIST, His

¹ Heb. ix. 24. ² Rev. v. 6; vii. 16.

prayers and the prayers of His Church are identified. When we pray to GOD, we end every prayer by offering it "in the Name" or "for the sake of our LORD JESUS CHRIST." Without His intervention there is no communion between GOD and man, but by Him we have "access to the FATHER." We stand yet without the veil, but our Forerunner has already entered within, and He carries to the throne of grace the prayers which we offer through the mediation of His human nature. Here some fall into great error, for they rest in a notion more or less defined, that at least since the Sacrifice of the Cross, there is a direct mode of communication between GOD as GOD, and man as man. And they speak as if this communication had been established once for all by the Death of CHRIST without reference to any subsequent acts of His on our behalf. The consequence such a notion tends to is this, that prayer offered in the Name of JESUS, is not an appeal to any present mediation or intercession, but rather a direct offering *by ourselves* of the merits of the SAVIOUR'S Passion. Against such a notion let us set the plain words of the Divine oracles, "There is one Mediator between GOD and man, the Man CHRIST JESUS," Who "ever liveth to make intercession for us." "Whatsoever ye shall ask the FATHER in My Name, He shall give it you."

III. Again, the Church beholds her exalted Head in the mystery of His Sacramental Presence. "A

little while, and the world seeth Me no more ; but ye see Me : because I live, ye shall live also.”¹ All vigour and life belonging to the members of CHRIST is derived from the life inherent in their Head, and therefore the Sacraments, which are the chief means of spiritual life, must needs have their efficacy not from any virtue which they possess in themselves, but through their derivation from, and union with the Man in heaven. From the fountain of His stricken body began to flow a never staying stream, the symbol and reality alike of the two sacraments by which He unites us to His Manhood, bestows on us the benefits of His passion, and makes us even now partakers of His glorious presence. By the water we are joined to His body in holy Baptism, and are made the sons of GOD, because He as Son of Man has stooped to us, that we may be lifted up. By the blood, that incorporation of our manhood with His is renewed and strengthened so that we walk, not in our own strength, but in the might of the living Bread which came down from heaven. We being thus *by means* united to His Manhood, so is His Manhood by *essential union* joined to that Divine nature in which He is one with the FATHER and with the HOLY GHOST ; and by this incorporation His last words of earthly prayer for His Church have their complete fulfilment. “That they may be one as We are ; as Thou, FATHER, art

¹ S. John xiv. 19.

in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.”¹

Thus do prayer and the sacraments derive their efficacy from the present work of our ascended LORD as they derive their origin from His finished work. His human nature is continually interceding for us with the FATHER, and continually joining us to Himself by the appointed means and channels of His grace. And as in our use of these, we give token of that willingness to be saved, without which we never can be ; so it is by these that “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto GOD by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” When therefore we think on JESUS as our SAVIOUR, we must not only see Him stretched upon the Cross dying for our sins ; (that were a sight of love, but yet not of the whole fulness of His Atonement,) but we must see Him ascended into heaven, and on the right hand of GOD, receiving gifts for men, and dispensing them in the bounties of His grace. We must not mutilate GOD’s plan for the restoration of mankind, as if the Atoner had said of our salvation, “It is finished,” and not of His own suffering. He is still working for us and within us, and it is by His continual work only that we are able to walk in that way to heaven, which His death and resurrection have opened for fallen man.

¹ S. John xvii. 11, 21.

And thus, though removed from her bodily sight until that time when "every eye shall see Him," the Church does still in this time of her militant waiting, look with the eye of faith upon her ascended and glorified Head; and as she daily gives thanks unto Him for the work that He wrought in the days of His past visitation, so does she "rejoice with joy unspeakable" in the consciousness of His ever-abiding Presence.

Lastly, in the present Manhood of the Atoner, we see Him yet as the loving and sympathising JESUS of Whom all is summed up, when it is said "He went about doing good." That which marked Him as the Son of Man on earth, is still His characteristic as Son of Man in heaven. It is on the experience gained in the time of His humiliation, and remembered in His exaltation, that we are taught by S. Paul to lay our hopes of the blessed LORD's present sympathy with His people. He wept at the grave of Lazarus, He sighed when He said, "Ephphatha" to the dumb, because He bore in one concentrated burden all our infirmities, and carried our sorrows. Therefore, when in view of His all-powerful intercession, we rejoice that "we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, JESUS, the SON of GOD," we may also comfort our weak hearts with the conviction that He is "not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feel-

ing of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are.”¹ As GOD, He could not have tasted the trials of our nature; whatever blessedness therefore we can suppose it would have been, that He would have known them by His Omniscience, yet we see from the Apostle’s words, and we feel by the instinct of our hearts, that it is now our great blessing for Him to know them by the experience of His manhood. Our sorrows and sufferings pierced His heart when He came among us in visible form; He has not set aside the memory of them now that He has gone away. He intercedes for us with that full appreciation of our infirmities and trials which experience superadds to knowledge; and from the depths of the same human sympathies, He measures out His gifts and mercy according to our needs.

Beholding, therefore, in our LORD’s exaltation the source of all grace, our strength in His intercessions, our life in His life; so do we behold therein also the pledge of His continued loving-kindness. And in all this His own word is realised, “Ye shall see Me, because I go to the FATHER.” He has gone to the FATHER, and now that FATHER has become both His and ours. He has gone to the FATHER, and yet we see Him in the litanies and supplications of His body, in the Sacraments of life, in the many tokens of His loving sympathy.

¹ Heb. iv. 15.

And, doubtless, the more we contemplate this truth of our Atoner's Manhood in heaven, the more we look at it in its just bearings, and strive to learn in it the great lesson of His unchanging love; so much the more will our own love for Him be enlarged, and our eyes opened to discern His beauty. We shall learn to appreciate more entirely the magnitude of His mighty Atonement, stretching backward to the beginning of sin, and forward to the plucking of the last brand from the burning, gathering within its grasp a great multitude of the redeemed which no man can number.

Looking also to its immediate relation with our own individual spirituality, we shall learn how justly to understand the true character of all means of grace, and to value them as veiling under an external form, the very "Fountain opened for all uncleanness." And above all, beyond all, yet mingling with all, there will be aroused in us that pervading sense of His constant Presence which constitutes the very life and substance of the Church's faith. "A little while" He has indeed removed His visible form from her sight, yet she beholds Him ever with the eye of faith, while for a "little while" He is gathering her children together; a "little while" she sees Him "as through a glass darkly," but soon she will see Him face to face, and behold "Him as He is" for ever.

X.

THE AT-ONE-MAKER IN JUDGMENT.

S. MATT. xxvi. 64.

HEREAFTER SHALL YE SEE THE SON OF MAN SITTING ON THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.

WHEN the At-one-Maker had gone up on high, there to re-present before the Mercy-seat of "the holy place not made with hands," that sacrifice which He offered up once for all upon the outer altar of the Cross, He sent messengers to His up-gazing Church, declaring that "this same JESUS" which was taken up from her into heaven, shall so come in like manner as the chosen witnesses had seen Him go into heaven.¹

And in what manner had they seen Him go into heaven? Even in that body of flesh which their eyes had seen, and their hands had handled, whose five redeeming wounds had proved it to be a living verity, and not a phantom, or immaterial spirit. Yet they

¹ Acts i. 11.

beheld this flesh of the GOD-Man in a different form from that in which the world had seen It grow from infancy to manhood, and afterwards pass through the gate of death ; for they now saw It unchanging and glorified, as It dwells in the heaven of heavens. Therefore their vision of the Son of Man, who saw Him during the forty days of His second sojourn on earth and at His Ascension, was a type of the dispensation of faith, wherein the Church beholds the glorified Manhood of her LORD and Head, and realizes a Presence which is unknown to the world. But a more universal revelation of the glorified JESUS is at hand ; for when the days of faith have an end, He will show Himself to the eyes of all in His second coming as He did in His first, save that the “form of a servant” will be without humiliation, and the glory of GOD will be visible even in the likeness of men.

Then He Who was despised and rejected, shall be found “sitting at the right hand of power,” and every eye shall see Him.” For it is fit that He Who humbled Himself should be highly exalted, not alone in the sight of angels and the saints in Paradise, but also of all for whom He made Himself of no reputation. Therefore shall He be the same JESUS to those who pierced Him, as well as to His beloved ; to His faithful servants, and to those who would not have this Man to reign over them. They will con-

fess Him to be their LORD who refused to behold Him as their SAVIOUR; some who nailed His holy Person to the wood of Calvary; some who crucify to themselves afresh the SON of GOD; some who blinded themselves to His Presence when He manifested forth His glory by open miracle; some who would not discern His Body when He presented Himself in the mysteries of faith. And when this same JESUS appears in unveiled glory, it will be that He may complete the settlement of His kingdom before giving it up to the FATHER; to which end He will add the work of judgment to that of His atonement; separating those who have been willing to be made at one with the FATHER, from those who by their own will and act have ratified, and established for ever, the alienation which was made by the Fall.

Men have often professed to doubt whether there will be a judgment after this life, but surely there is an evidence, apart even from Scripture or reasoning, which comes home to us in this matter. If there is any universal harmony of our conscious nature, it is sounded when we strike this chord of a judgment to come, a time when GOD will give to every man according to his works. It sounds in the heart of Dives, because he knows himself to have chosen his "good things" in this life, and that such as they have been they were his own choosing, and are all the good he can look for; and in the heart of Lazarus,

because he knows that his "evil things" of this world will be changed into good by the righteous Judge. It sounds in the heart of Felix, because he knows that unjust judgment and profligate living are no titles to future joy; and in the heart of Paul because of his assurance that there is a glory to be revealed with which the trials of this present life are not to be compared. Scientific heathen sceptics mocked when they heard that our dead bodies would again become alive, but they dared not revile when they heard of the judgment day, for this part of the creed of S. Paul was but the common teaching of natural instinct, which the utmost scepticism of a godless philosophy dared not deny.¹ Can men's hearts have become so hardened in later days, that the instinct which enlightened the heathen of old fails to teach those who believe themselves wiser and better? It may be, indeed, that there is a fearful cause lying at the root of their unbelief, who so commonly declare their opinion that this teaching of the Church is little better than an ancient superstition. Perhaps men's probation is ended long before their life closes; and even at a time when all their intellectual powers are in full vigour, God their FATHER gives them up, as He did His children Israel of old, "to follow their own imagination;" the "candle of the LORD" is withdrawn, the inward con-

¹ Acts xvii. 31, 32.

science is no longer enlightened ; and those who are wise in this world's wisdom, become so darkened in their foolish hearts as to the wisdom which cometh down from above, that they cease even to perceive the ancient oracle of God, " If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."¹

Again, there are Christian men who would limit this Article of the Creed to a particular judgment ; as if each soul received its final award immediately after death, and then passed at once to its place in heaven or hell. But, though it is reasonable to think that every disembodied soul is so far judged on its separation from the body, as that it passes to a state which is a foretaste of its final bliss or woe ; yet nothing can be plainer than the witness of Holy Scripture that there is a time yet future, when all men shall rise again with their bodies ; that at this general resurrection there will be a separation of the good from the evil-doers ; and that this separation will immediately precede a state of final reward for the good, and final punishment for the reprobate, each greater in degree than that on which the disembodied soul entered at the hour of death.

For as it is plain that men have been laid in the grave generation after generation, and have not yet arisen from their place, so it is plain that our blessed

¹ Gen. iv. 7.

LORD has said, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear" the "voice" of "the Son of Man," and "shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."¹ As it is plain that the Son of Man in His once coming into the world came in humiliation and was seen of a few only, they being chiefly of one nation; so it is plain that He "shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him," and that "then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations," at which time "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left."² And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal;"³ "For then shall He reward every man according to his works."⁴ Of such a judgment was it that S. Paul preached to the learned Athenians when he declared of the unknown God Whom they, in ignorance, worshipped, that "He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man Whom He hath ordained."⁵ Of such, to those for whose faith and love he most thanked God, saying, "The LORD JESUS shall be

¹ S. John v. 28, 29.² S. Matt. xxv. 31.³ Ibid. 46.⁴ S. Matt. xvi. 27.⁵ Acts xvii. 31.

works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and the grave delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works.”¹

The substance then of Christian truth respecting the great Day of Judgment is, that our LORD JESUS CHRIST will come in great glory and power, at the end of the world, to judge all men that have ever lived, both as to their souls and bodies; that His judgment will be final and irreversible; that, according to that judgment, those whom He approves will go into Life everlasting, but the rejected will receive the punishment which is their due.

Since we shall hereafter consider what is revealed to us respecting the state of the blessed in heaven, let us now see what may be learned of those final woes, the prospect of which, makes this judgment of the Son of Man so terrible to look forward to.

Now, Holy Scripture everywhere speaks of hell as a place of fire, and unending torment. And our blessed LORD Himself,—that light which could not, in any measure, be darkness, and that truth which could not in any way misrepresent a fact,—He was accustomed to describe this abode of the wicked after judgment, in terms which convey ideas of most intense horror and woe; a place where they shall be cast bound hand and foot, into utter darkness,

¹ Rev. xx. 11, 13.

where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."¹ And when in the parable of the sheep and the goats He describes with greater detail the transactions of the awful day, He uses these words, as conveying to the wicked the declaration of their final sentence; "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."² Take such words how we will, literally or otherwise, we dare not look upon them but as words of infallible truth, representing to us a state of woe whose anguish no human language can exaggerate; a state wherein the body and soul both being cast into hell,³ the pains of mind, as well as those of sense, will reach their utmost extreme, and endure unceasingly; a state wherein the vision of God, the highest bliss and glory of heaven, will be utterly excluded, and instead of It will be the presence of the devil, the full completion of the curse of hell.

It would be irreverent to fill up such an outline as this with anything of speculation; but there are certain consequences which seem naturally to follow the commission of sin, and analogies of punishment in the present dispensation of God's Providence, which seem to furnish us with some measure of detail respecting the final state of the reprobate.

¹ S. Mark ix. 44; S. Matt. xxii. 13, &c.

² S. Matt. xxv. 41.

³ S. Matt. x. 28.

For example, the eye which ever keeps in view God's moral government of the world, can often discern a relation between afflictive events or states of life,—such as diseases, so-called accidents, and even death itself,—and sins going before. Such a relation is not unknown to the common traditions of mankind; and while Christians often give it the name of “judgment,” the heathen have almost as commonly believed it to be the indication of an overruling Power which visited sin with punishment, and adapted the nature of the one to that of the other. And though we may not always be able to trace the course of such temporal judgments; though there may often seem striking contradictions to the principle of them; yet the general feeling of mankind respecting them is such as to offer strong testimony to a very awful truth, that each sin committed lays up for and adjusts to itself (so to speak) a punishment analogous and proportionate to itself, in a state of retribution; such that the selfish ease of Dives is turned into pain and unrest; his sumptuous, but unthankful daily fare, into the constant torment of most miserable privation.

It is thus that God foreshadows in His present anger, that great and terrible day when He will pour out His final wrath; a day not of indiscriminate punishment, but of just and merited retribution. And moreover, as the conscience of men, when not

wholly deadened, has a two-fold voice, partly of warning and partly of accusation ; it will at the last, be so sharpened into self-conviction, that there will be a recognition, even by the reprobate, of indisputable justice in their condemnation. For the words of the Judge are, “out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant;” “by thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned.” Such a self-conviction, extending its bitter scrutiny to every moment of life, cannot but add fearfully to the sufferings of hell. Details of sins will be brought out, as the most minute objects are represented in a sun-picture. Their origin, their course, their consequences will be gathered together in one concentrated act of memory, henceforth ever present and ineffaceable. A full consciousness of sin would often in this life be indeed a burden too heavy for us to bear, and under it we must either despair or repent ; but the agony of that awful consciousness of sin hereafter will admit of no repentance, and all that remains to it,—its unutterable despair,—is typified by the outer darkness, the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then will doubtless be fully revealed to each, the hidden mysteries which underlie the probation of us all ; mysteries, (not of absolute decree to glory or condemnation, as some say, but) of the righteous LORD’S predestinating purposes co-operating with,

instead of going apart from, our own free-will. Then will be seen why some men have been set in the paths of grace, while others have had little more than the light of nature; why the most privileged have sometimes fallen, and those in the lowest rooms been bidden to come up higher. And who shall say but there shall be, at and after the judgment, a clear vision of saving grace once rejected, and for ever out of reach; so that eyes which were dulled to the sight of the riches that are in CHRIST will then be opened to see their full value, and the sight will be as waters of life which the thirsty tongue can never touch.

One other truth also is to be inferred respecting the state of the wicked after judgment, which may not be set aside. Though death and judgment will have broken asunder for ever the bonds which bound them to the At-one-Maker; yet they will so far participate in the result of His work, that they will rise again from the grave, and live for ever in the very bodies which they had when on earth. And as on the doctrine of a bodily resurrection is chiefly founded our hope of mutual recognition among the blessed in heaven, so must we, on the same ground, believe that the relations of their former state will remain unchanged, even among those who depart into the outer darkness. Poets have not gone beyond the bounds of natural deduction from Holy Scripture when they have made the mutual recognition of

those who once walked in the fellowship of sin, one of the greatest horrors of that place where there is no hope; nor when they have added to the wretchedness of self-reproach, the misery of wildest hate and revenge; the recklessness of unmitigated despair. It had been better for the lost, never to have lived, than to have been made one with CHRIST, and afterwards be numbered among the reprobates. For as His work will bring about the greatest joy, in the Life eternal of all who continued in union with Him, so will it add ten-fold to the woes of all whose life is turned into undying death, because they refused to have a part in the glorification of their Head.¹ "In

¹ It seems strange that any doubts should be raised, as to the meaning of the word translated "eternal," in reference to the duration of punishment, when every argument that lessens the force of its application to hell, must weaken in a corresponding degree, the ground of our hope in a never ending state of bliss. Has any believer in a future state ever ventured to question the eternity of the blessed in heaven?

But, it seems to me, the moral weight of the doctrine consists less than it is customary to represent in the word *αἰώνιος*—eternal. Is it plain that those whom the Judge places on His left hand at the great Day are never thenceforth to be restored to His favour? Is it plain that there is a "second death" after the judgment, when the body and soul will have their part in a punishment which none can anticipate for their own soul and body without great horror? If these things are plain, then whether the duration of such woe be limited or unlimited, seems *as it bears on our present probation*, a comparatively speculative question. For beyond certain bounds, ordinary understandings do not appreciate the value of high num-

those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.”¹

In that awful day then, when these things shall begin to come to pass, when the Winnower shall purge His floor, and the Shepherd divide His sheep from the goats; where shall be the stay and hope of any of the sons of men, seeing that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God?

As the Person of the At-one-Maker was the ground of hope in the beginning of the Atonement, so will it be in the end. For He Who shall sit upon the throne of His glory will be the same Son of Man Who came once in the lowliness of Nazareth and Calvary; and though His humiliation will have passed away, His charity will be unfaded. Therefore beside the white

bers, by which only eternity can be represented; and as a practical question, it may be doubted whether the prospect of punishment during a finite period, such as the mind can take in view, is not more terrible than when extended to that endless duration of which it can form no idea. The man who is not turned aside from sin by the fear of God’s wrath poured out upon him during 100 or 1000 years, will not be terrified when he is told that it will be poured out for untold millions of ages. And on the other hand, what gain is it to believe that the punishment of hell is not eternal? Are any really *comforted* by such a denial, who believe at all in the punishment of the wicked? Is the far distant prospect of annihilation, after a long period of dreadful agony, a real ground of satisfaction to any?

¹ Rev. ix. 6.

throne, the token of judgment, there will be the sign of the Son of Man, the token of redemption, intercession, and salvation. An inflexible judgment founded on the balance of absolute right and wrong, must necessarily end in the condemnation of all men, seeing that all have failed to attain any merit to God's mercy by their good works, but a judgment founded in the work of the Cross is full of hope, for it tells of forgiving mercy, human sympathy, and assisting grace.

To "This same JESUS," the FATHER hath committed judgment because He is the Son of Man. Is not the very name a memorial of pity for sinners? For it was "this same JESUS" Who said to the adulteress, "Hath no man condemned thee? Neither do I;" the same Who overthrew the sevenfold power of Satan that He might draw unto Himself "her that had been a sinner;" the same Whose heart sorrowed for the impenitence of His enemies, and Who stooped from the height of glory that He might number Saul the persecutor among His own. Surely the Human Form of the Judge will in itself be a comfort to the penitent, as it will be a sign and fiat of condemnation to those who pierced Him; a token that in the midst of judgment remembering mercy, He will have saved to the uttermost, and will condemn only where love was unable to redeem. Whether therefore they have been resting in Paradise, or are of the number who shall be alive at His coming, it

will be the substance of the saints' hope in all their consciousness of demerit, that He is their Judge Who was their SAVIOUR, and that though He will judge them by their works indeed, He will measure, not the intrinsic merit of those works, but their worth in Him. In this exaltation of the At-one-maker to the throne of judgment, they behold the natural terminus to which all the previous gradations of His humanity have ascended; but they are conscious that in the unity of His Body His exaltation is the forerunner of theirs; so that what was lacking in the dispensation of grace which went before, will now be made up to them in the judgment. There was one Baptism for the remission of sins, yet in that remission there was something wanting of fulness because of the imperfect nature still remaining; there was a sacrament for the renewal of grace, and sacramental ordinances for its support; yet none did, even in the end, raise up the Christian to the measure of the fulness of CHRIST; there was the holy rest of Paradise, yet the souls beneath the altar cried, "LORD, how long?" as waiting for still higher things. But the judgment will be, so to speak, the complement of all these, and there shall be heaped up a full remission, a perfect unity, and an unalloyed joy, a measure pressed down and running over.

The height of desire then for the Judgment Day is, that we who are in ourselves all undeserving, may

be able to plead our unbroken union with Him Who is worthy, and of Whose heavenly glory each of those who are found members of His Body in that day will be made partakers. Blessed will they be, who at the dread hour of judgment, can point to the sign of the Son of Man, and say, "O LORD, my Judge, I plead with Thee Thy Cross, and Thy precious Blood, as Thou hast pleaded them with the FATHER for me. I come to Thine all-discerning judgment, not by myself, but in the fellowship of Thy sacred Unity. Thou hast given Thyself unto me; Thou art in me, and I in Thee; Thou hast made me Thine, and none can pluck me out of Thine hand. Unworthy as I should be by myself, I am not unworthy in Thee; Thou, O blessed and merciful Judge, hast been my Redeemer, and Thou hast interceded for the sheep which Thy Blood hath purchased; therefore, I believe that Thou wilt save me in this Thy dreadful judgment, and show me Thy face in glory everlasting."

XI.

THE ABIDING COMFORT OF THE ATONEMENT.

S. JOHN xvi. 7.

IF I GO NOT AWAY, THE COMFORTER WILL NOT COME UNTO YOU; BUT IF I DEPART, I WILL SEND HIM UNTO YOU.

OF all the words which JESUS uttered to His disciples, none could have been harder to their understandings than these, "It is expedient for you that I go away." Was He not all in all to them? Had He not been their only Light since their hearts had been brought to receive Him; and had they not just come to a more perfect knowledge of Him as their Divine as well as human LORD? How had they rested day by day on His power, love, and sympathy till there seemed nothing else on earth to be desired beside Him. Could it be expedient for *them* that their LORD should go away? Surely this was a hard saying.

Now such thoughts as these, He Who seeth into

the hearts of men answered in one word, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." It was far better that He should depart than remain, better, that is for *them*, He thought not of Himself, though He knew that His sorrows were giving way to the glory of the FATHER's right hand; it was better for them that He should die and depart to heaven, than that they should live on earth without the Comforter. His going away, i.e., His death on the Cross, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, would result in the coming of Another Who should give to the "little flock" and to the Church gifts greater than He Himself had ever given while He dwelt therein in visible presence. And yet He told them that He would be with them always even to the end of the world. Would then He be with them, and the Comforter also? Or would the Comforter replace, and as it were supersede the SON? Mysterious difficulties which cast a veil before the eye of their faith! Yet how they all vanished when the Comforter had indeed been revealed, and realised the promise of CHRIST, that He should guide them into all truth.

Then they learned indeed that the Comforter of the Church in her LORD's absence was GOD the HOLY GHOST, One with the FATHER and the SON. They knew that since JESUS and the Comforter were one GOD, therefore their work was all one also; and

that as the SON had given Himself to the Church for the restoration of men to GOD's kingdom, so the HOLY GHOST had come among men that He might continue the work of salvation in CHRIST, which CHRIST Himself had begun.

"My FATHER worketh hitherto, and I work;" so it had ever been, the undivided Godhead all consenting together in unity of purpose, as well as existing together in unity of being. "The SON can do nothing of Himself,"¹ nor the HOLY SPIRIT "speak of Himself,"² but whatsoever the FATHER "doeth, these also doeth the SON likewise," and "whatsoever" the Comforter "shall hear, that shall He speak;" for "the FATHER is Almighty, the SON Almighty, and the HOLY GHOST Almighty; and yet they are not three Almighties but one Almighty." So it was in the work of creation, when the FATHER "made the worlds" by His SON,³ even the "Word of GOD;"⁴ when the Spirit of GOD moved upon the face of the waters,⁵ and the Blessed Three in One said, "Let Us make man in our Image, after our Likeness."⁶ So it was also in the beginning of the new creation, when "the FATHER sent the SON into the world" by the operation of the HOLY GHOST; and so also at the inauguration of the At-one-maker's office, when all the Blessed Three manifested themselves together at

¹ S. John v. 19.² S. John xvi. 13.³ Heb. i. 2.⁴ 2 S. Peter iii. 5.⁵ Gen. i. 2.⁶ Gen. i. 26.

the Baptism in Jordan. Thus, as the Comforter was no new Person, but GOD the HOLY GHOST; so was His work no new development of the Godhead, nor separate from the work of power which had already been accomplished in the SON. As GOD the HOLY GHOST had ever worked with the FATHER and the SON, even from the time of creation, and as He had ever wrought in unity with them, so now was He working the same work for which the FATHER had sent the SON, for which the SON had become incarnate, and died, and rose again. The Third Person in the ever blessed Trinity came not to take up the work of salvation where the Second had laid it down, but still to co-operate with the At-one-maker, as He had done in His Incarnation and Baptism, and to continue that co-operation until the work of atonement shall have come to an end in the glory of life everlasting.

We may therefore no more speak of the work of CHRIST as if it were a *finished* work, and that of the HOLY GHOST alone now going on, than we may deny the unity of both their Persons in one undivided, and eternal Godhead.

Let us therefore inquire in what manner the present and continued unity of their operation is to be traced in the work of Atonement.

GOD the SON took the nature of man into His own Divine nature, that He might be the two-fold

At-one-maker between God and man. And by this sanctification of our manhood in His Incarnation, by the oblation of it in His own person on the Cross, by the raising it in His own person from the dead, by the ascension of it in His own person to heaven, He accomplished the corporate work, so to speak, of the Atonement: that is, He made it possible for the *nature* of man to appear before the presence of God in heaven. But because this great end was brought about, is every one who partakes of the nature of man saved at once? Because he is a man for whom CHRIST died, and whose salvation is made possible by the Atonement, is the soul of every man sure from first to last of a place at God's right hand? So far from this being the case we know that although CHRIST came and went away that all men might be saved, yet there are multitudes of men who will be lost beyond redemption: it is evident therefore that the Atonement wrought for the benefit of all mankind is one thing; the application of that Atonement to individual men, so that they themselves shall in their own persons receive the benefit thereof, is another.

And yet what can be more certain than this, that there is no individual soul saved, which is not saved by its own individual participation in the Atonement? As our human nature in a corporate whole was sanctified, redeemed and exalted by CHRIST's par-

taking thereof, so must every individual person be sanctified, redeemed, and exalted by partaking of CHRIST. He is the invigorating and sustaining life of every soul that lives for heaven. If we are branches of Him, the true Vine, if He be in us and we in Him, then we are partakers of the whole work which He has wrought for the salvation of men; if He be not in us nor we in Him, then we are as surely out of the reach of His Atonement as if it had never been begun. If He is CHRIST present in us, we live, if He is CHRIST absent from our souls, we live neither here nor hereafter.

The presence of CHRIST in each one of us individually is therefore as absolute a necessity for salvation, as His presence in our nature for the sufferings of the Cross. This being so, we must believe that the presence in us of His invisible Person is as surely to be brought about, as His Incarnation in visible form at the first. And to this apply those many plain promises which He made respecting His continuance with the members of His Body mystical. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."¹ "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you."² "At that day ye shall know that I am in My FATHER, and ye in Me, and I in you."³ "Abide in Me, and I in you."⁴

¹ S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

² S. John xiv. 18.

³ S. John xiv. 20.

⁴ S. John xv. 4.

“He that loveth Me shall be loved of My FATHER, and I will love him, and will *manifest* Myself to him, We will come unto him, and *make Our abode* with him.”¹ So again also the HOLY GHOST has taught us by the Apostles, the absolute necessity of CHRIST’s continual presence to us as individuals, saying that we are part of the Body of CHRIST,² that we are in CHRIST,³ that we are to put on the LORD JESUS CHRIST,⁴ as we compass ourselves round with a garment, that we are, to sum up all, made partakers of the Divine nature by incorporation with CHRIST.⁵

May we not then dare to say,—reverently calling to mind how imperfectly Divine realities can be expressed by human words,—that in the work of CHRIST our SAVIOUR, from the time that He first put on our manhood till He carried it to heaven, He was fashioning Himself into a healing substance, Whose virtue being incorporated with our souls and bodies, should neutralise the poison of the fall, and make them fit for paradise, the resurrection, and heaven? Therefore it was expedient that He should go away, because if He went not away, the Comforter would not come among men. Of no avail would it have been that the Body of CHRIST had been made fit for the healing of the nations, if

¹ S. John xiv. 21—23.

² Eph. v. 30.

³ 2 Cor. v. 17.

⁴ Rom. xiii. 14.

⁵ 2 S. Pet. i. 4.

there had been no power by whom the antidote should be given to the sufferer. But having gone away in His death, resurrection, and exaltation, and having by that going away made Himself the full and sufficient substance of the Atonement, He has now sent One on earth able to continue His presence among us, Whose presence is our life, and to make between us and Him, a living bond that need never be broken.

JESUS, the At-one-maker, being therefore the Person by union with Whom we can alone be raised to Heaven; it is necessary that He should ever be with us by His mystical presence, according to His promise, "I am with you alway." And the HOLY GHOST being the Person by Whom that union is effected, it is necessary that the other promise shall be fulfilled also, "GOD the FATHER shall give you another Comforter which is the HOLY GHOST," that "He may abide with you for ever."¹ So mighty is the work of man's salvation, that only the co-operation of the whole Blessed Trinity in Unity can bring about the saving of one single soul. GOD the HOLY GHOST by giving us to partake of CHRIST's reconciling person and work, GOD the SON by perfecting a mediation in His Person, and an intercession through His office; GOD the FATHER by granting to us par-

¹ S. John xiv. 16.

don and salvation for His sake Who reconciles us to Him.

If it be so then that the HOLY GHOST, Who first wrought CHRIST's presence in the world, works it still in all who gain the benefit of the Atonement, this question further arises, what are the means by which this great necessity of our salvation is brought about? For, as we are often reminded, it is God's good pleasure ordinarily to work out His purposes among men rather by intermediate channels, than by direct miracles; which means are also the sign whereby we discern His operation. As an illustration of this principle, and one bearing on the case before us, the very death of CHRIST itself may be adduced; for though He gave up His life willingly, and no man could take it from Him, yet may we reasonably conclude that He gave up His life by the means which were used, such "second causes" as would occasion the death of any man, equally with that of the Man of Sorrows. And still more to the purpose is it, that the substance of that Holy Body which is now in heaven, was not formed at once by the sudden miracle of a new creation, but gradually and in a natural manner, out of the substance of the Blessed Virgin, so that He became as perfectly Man of the substance of His Mother, as He is God of the substance of GOD the FATHER.

Moreover, when our LORD gave to His Apostles

the gift of the HOLY GHOST for the work of the ministry,¹ He conveyed the gift to them with an external sign which appears to have been the actual means of its conveyance.² And throughout the New Testament it will be found that the coming of the HOLY GHOST to individuals is generally mentioned in connection with some visible act of men, the laying on of hands, or the washing with water. At Samaria, when SS. Peter and John had come down, they "prayed for them that they might receive the HOLY GHOST, then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the HOLY GHOST."³ "And when Simon," the sorcerer, "saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the HOLY GHOST was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the HOLY GHOST."⁴ S. Peter indeed rebuked him for his words, but the rebuke was administered not because of any erroneous opinion as to the effect produced by Apostolic imposition of hands, but because of the base and blasphemous idea that the gift of God was to be bought with money like merchandize. Again, we read of some, that "when Paul had laid his hands

¹ Not the *extraordinary* gift of the HOLY GHOST which was given to them as Apostles, but the *ordinary* gift bestowed on them as they were representatives of the whole Christian ministry. The former was temporary, the latter permanent in the Church.

² S. John xx. 22. ³ Acts viii. 15, 17. ⁴ Acts viii. 18, 19.

upon them, the HOLY GHOST came on them.”¹ And when the HOLY GHOST said, “Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work” of their ministry, the other Apostles laid their hands upon them.² To name no more, S. Paul writing to Timothy, reminds him of the gift which he had by “the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery,”³ which words, in connection with the other passages quoted, seem certainly to refer to the gift of the HOLY GHOST.

Thus the Christian ministry set apart by the laying on of hands by Apostles at first, and afterwards by Elders or Bishops, was appointed to be the channel by which God the HOLY GHOST exercised His power in the Church; and upon scriptural authority she says to her priests, “Receive the HOLY GHOST for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed to thee by the laying on of hands.” They therefore who are separated for the work of the ministry are the means by which God the HOLY GHOST unites men to the At-one-maker, and conveys to them the benefit of the Atonement. They are His agents by whom we are united to CHRIST in holy Baptism, so that their act is the outward sign of what He Himself effects in our nature, and the means by which it is effected, “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body.”⁴ By

¹ Acts xix. 6.

² Acts xiii. 2.

³ 1 Tim. iv. 14.

⁴ 1 Cor. xii. 13.

“one Spirit,” yet not without water and the ministration of men; for “Except a man be born of *water* and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”¹ Thus, in the initiatory Sacrament of CHRIST’s appointment, the HOLY GHOST is ever at work in the Church, conveying by her ministers the unspeakable gift of an incorporation into the Body of CHRIST, so that they who come under His operation, become “new creatures” and put on CHRIST, that He dwells in them, and they in Him, and they are made living branches of the Life-giving Vine.

Moreover it is by the power of the HOLY GHOST, vouchsafed to us through the same ministration of the priesthood, that the presence of the At-one-maker is realized in the other Sacrament of His Body and Blood. In ancient liturgies, and in the first Book of Common Prayer, there was an especial recognition of this great truth by an invocation of the HOLY GHOST, going before the act of consecration. For some reason or other, probably connected with superstitions of that day, the Church saw fit to omit the very words of this invocation from the later Prayer Book;² but since it is still prayed that “we may be partakers of” the “most

¹ S. John iii. 5.

² It may be that the reason of the omission was a wish to leave undetermined the question whether there is a Real Presence in the consecrated elements irrespective of the receiver.

blessed Body and Blood of CHRIST," and we are told in the authoritative exposition of the doctrine of the Eucharist, that this "marvellous incorporation" is wrought "through faith," "by the operation of the HOLY GHOST (*the very bond of our conjunction with CHRIST*)," ¹ the doctrine is still fully acknowledged by our branch of the Church Catholic. As therefore we confess that it is by the operation of GOD the HOLY GHOST through the ministration of His appointed servants that we are first made partakers of CHRIST in holy Baptism, so must we acknowledge the same power and the same agency as conveying to us the gift of CHRIST's Presence in the Holy Communion.

Thus is the Comforter abiding with us ever, and by Him the mystical Presence of the Incarnate SON. As at the first He wrought the mystery of GOD with man by unity of Person in one CHRIST, so now does He effect the mystery of our "conjunction with CHRIST" in Sacraments. So that the grace of the Incarnation is being continually extended forth to every age, and made the living principle of all faith and practice. Not now does the Comforter manifest His power in tongues of flaming light, and with the noise of a mighty rushing wind, as He did to the Apostles; not now does He work by the extraordinary gifts of inspiration, and tongues, and miracles,

¹ Homily on the "Worthy receiving of the Sacrament."

as in the early ages of the Church; but though silently, and by ordinary gifts, and by human agencies, He dwells with us still, working with the FATHER and the SON, as in the first days of creation. The fire, the earthquake, and the storm, no longer attract the outward sense, yet the eye of faith discerns the presence which He reveals; and when the sound of the still small voice is heard by the ear of the believer, he bows the knee in adoration of His Majesty Whose power declares Him One with the FATHER and the SON, the glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

And, albeit "the manifestations of the Spirit" are now given without visible miracle, yet are they as much as ever "given to every man to profit withal;" and whatsoever benefit we gain from the dispensation under which we live, it is through His Power sanctifying us, enlightening us, helping our infirmities. Can we be made more holy than by partaking in CHRIST and His purity? Is there spiritual knowledge higher than that which He can bring us Who is the Wisdom and Word of God, the Light that cometh into the world? Or can our infirmities be better holpen than by the strength of JESUS being made our strength? If none of these things can be, then let us discern the tokens of God's abounding love towards us in the dispensation of the HOLY GHOST, by Whom CHRIST, Holy, Wise,

and Almighty, is made for ever a present CHRIST to the souls of the faithful.

He Who said that He would not leave us comfortless has kept His word, He has come unto us, and taken up His abode with us, and if we are faithful to Him, He will never leave us nor forsake us. Drawing us into the unity of man with CHRIST, and CHRIST with GOD, the HOLY SPIRIT is working out the last work of the Atonement on earth, making men links in that two-fold chain whereby heaven is brought down to earth, and earth carried up to the glorious Presence. We are unholy in Adam, and GOD the HOLY GHOST makes us members of CHRIST; we are weak and ever failing, He helpeth our infirmities by giving us communion with His Person Whose strength bore up a world from the abyss of the fall; we are the vanquished of death and the grave, He gives us to be one with Him Who is their Conqueror; we are at warfare all our lives long, He gives us to rest in JESUS. And when by the infinite mercy of GOD every hindrance has been put out of the way, "we all with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the LORD," shall be "changed into the same Image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD."

XII.

THE VISIBLE UNITY.

S. JOHN XV. 5.

I AM THE VINE, YE ARE THE BRANCHES.

THESE few words of parable set forth the nature of Christian life,—that it is a life of unity in plurality, not one of isolation and independence. So long as the branches are part of the living Vine they themselves have life; and they only live because the Vine lives, and diffuses its life through them. This *living* unity is moreover a *visible* unity; if a branch is dead, we know that its conjunction with the Vine is broken; if it is cut off, we know that it is dead. The At-one-Maker is the “True Vine,” the original principle of Unity and Life; all who are grafted into Him are the branches, which derive their life from Him, and retain it only as they retain their union with Him. As the branch grows out of the Vine, and is nourished by the life of the Vine passing through every spray and tendril, so Christians grow out of CHRIST, and receive strength of life from Him. Though, therefore, the life itself is an unseen principle or power,

there is a visible manifestation of it, by the outward sign of unity; and the man can no more be thought to be partaking in the hidden *life* of CHRIST, who is plainly cut off from the *unity* of CHRIST, than the branch can be supposed to live which is severed from the Vine.

Now it is plain there was no personal union visible between CHRIST and His disciples, although He sets forth to them so plainly that such an union between Him, the Vine, and them, the branches, is their only source of life. It is evident, that although what He speaks of must certainly be *real*, it is yet *mystical*: let us see, therefore, if in any other part of Holy Scripture, there is that which will throw light on the mystery.

1. The similitude of the Vine was not unknown in elder days. The Psalmist says, "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. . . . Return, we beseech Thee, O GOD of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted."¹

¹ Ps. lxxx. 8, 15.

And Isaiah; "Now will I sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved touching His vineyard. My Well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill : the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant."¹ "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me."² "Many pastors have destroyed My vineyard, they have trodden My portion under foot, they have made My pleasant portion a desolate wilderness."³ Here is symbolized to us by the figure of the vine and the vineyard, now spreading toward the sea, in glory, beauty, and fruitfulness, now lying desolate through the unfaithfulness of her pastors, the Church of old, planted by GOD in the seed of Abraham His chosen. It would seem, to be not improbable, therefore, that our LORD was but consecrating to a more exalted meaning a parable already familiar to their ears, when He said to His disciples, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." It had ever typified the beauty and fruitfulness of the Church of God, the outward form, as it were, of the Spouse; and He would add thereto the type of the inward life by which all its branches grow and spread forth, the unity in which alone that life can exist.

2. Again, as the words of the parable are illus-

¹ Isa. v. 1, 7.

² Jer. ii. 21.

³ Jer. xii. 10.

trated by a reference to its ancient use in prophecy, so is the principle of it still more fully illustrated by the language of S. Paul. Speaking of the whole society of Christian people everywhere, he says, "Ye are the body of CHRIST, and members in particular."¹ Ye are, that is, members of Him Whom God gave "to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body."² Indeed, there is the closest analogy between the words of the LORD and those of His Apostle, for as our LORD teaches us that He Himself is the life of the whole Vine, but that the branches go to make up its unity; so also S. Paul says, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is CHRIST."³ As CHRIST had said of Himself, "I am the Vine," so does His Apostle dare to call the whole unity of Christian people by the very name of their Head,—“so also is CHRIST.”

Wherefore, as the Vine in the elder dispensation was the symbol of that elect people whom God had taken out of the world to be the witness and abode of His glory, so does it now signify the whole company of those whom He has predestinated to the unity of CHRIST, "the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." They are branches of the Vine, because the HOLY GHOST has joined them to CHRIST in the sacrament of Baptism,

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 27.² Eph. i. 22.³ 1 Cor. xii. 12.

making them partakers of His Life and strength; and because this union is a real mystical union, not a mere figure of speech, they are the members of His mystical Body in Whom "it hath pleased the FATHER that all fulness should dwell;" His fulness is diffused into them, and by them He is pleased that His mystical Body shall grow in stature, the True Vine extend itself till It has "filled the land."

It will follow from all this, that as the life of the Vine is co-extensive with its unity, the unity of CHRIST's mystical Body, the Church, is not what *may* be, or ought to be, but what *must* be. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without" (that is, *separate from*) "Me, ye can do nothing." Independent life is impossible; as each branch has life at all, only by abiding in the vine, so each by partaking of that life which is divided among all, is associated with all, and to be out of the fellowship of each other, is to be out of the unity of CHRIST. If there is not an outward unity of every branch with every other, through the Stem, then those which are wanting in the visible conjunction, must be wanting also in the inward and invisible life. Hence those build on, at the least, an unscriptural foundation, who raise up any hope of salvation

out of the visible unity of the Church of CHRIST; for whatever mercies the Judge may have in store for the ignorant and the heathen, He has said to *us*, “Without Me, ye can do nothing.” For as S. Paul so clearly shows us, this unity extends its efficacy through the length and breadth of both faith and practical holiness, and these together make up the sum of our religion. Thus, when warning the Colossians against the influence of some who taught other doctrine than the Apostolic faith, he declares that those who have wandered into errors of belief, have severed themselves from the body of CHRIST; “not holding the Head, from Which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.”¹ In like manner, writing to the Ephesians, he states as the very end and object of the Christian system that we should all “come in the unity of the faith,” to that perfection of holiness which he describes as the “stature of the fulness of CHRIST.” This attainment of personal holiness he describes more at large in the passage following as growing up “into Him in all things Which is the Head, even CHRIST; from Whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the

¹ Coloss. ii. 19.

edifying of itself in love.”¹ For what do these words mean but this? that every one who is once brought into membership with CHRIST, grows in spiritual strength and stature by the nourishment which he derives through that union, and through it alone; that the whole body grows according to the unity of its members, and that it is compacted and built up into the stature of the regenerated Creation of God by the blood of the At-one-Maker flowing through all its arteries, and keeping up life in every part, from head to foot.

This plain truth then, is the summing up of all; that as a limb cut off from the visible unity of the body, ceases to partake of the unseen life which flows through and invigorates that body, as a branch plucked off from the vine withers and decays, so one cut off from the visible unity of CHRIST’s members, is cut off from CHRIST: that they who part with outward unity, lose also inward life; they who give up the unity of the faith, give up practical holiness also. “If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”²

But we must remember, that for those who have been once grafted into the Body of CHRIST, this question of severance from it is one of *degree*. None such can, as yet, be utterly cut off from CHRIST, but

¹ Eph. iv. 16.

² S. John xv. 6.

the wilfully apostate; none who have once been brought into the visible unity of the Church can be entirely cut off from it, but by a renunciation of their Baptism. Hence for the lawfully baptized the chief consideration is this; are they so abiding in the visible unity of CHRIST'S Body as to receive the inward and unseen life which flows from Him into His members? Are they so joined to the Vine that they bear fruit as well as a show of leaves? "I am the true Vine, and My FATHER is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."¹ This question also will necessarily arise: since the inward life by which spirituality and holiness is to be attained, so plainly depends upon the outward unity; or rather, since these two are so interdependent on each other; where may we discern the visible tokens of this necessary unity?

Now the marks of the Church as set forth by our own branch of it are these, the teaching of the pure Word of GOD, and the due administration in all essentials of the Holy Sacraments.² If therefore we would ensure our living conjunction with the true Vine, we must belong to that "congregation of faithful men," in whatever part of the world they may be, among whom the revealed faith is taught with-

¹ S. John xv. 2.

² See the 19th Article of Religion.

out corruption or adulteration, and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the LORD'S Supper given with essential *substance* and *form*. In both cases, of course, the authoritative rule of the "congregation" is to be the test, not the individual practice of particular men, for the latter may be in disobedience to the former.

As to the first named mark of the visible Church, the teaching of the pure Word of GOD, it is sufficiently plain that every society answers to it, which authoritatively puts forth the honest interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, enjoining all her teachers to inculcate nothing as a matter of religion, which is not consistent therewith. Suppose the case, for example, of a body of men calling themselves Christians, or the Church, who should make it part of their teaching that our LORD JESUS CHRIST is not the Very and Eternal SON of GOD. Or another society which set forth that men can be saved without the use of means of grace. In each of these societies there would be at least this one mark wanting, the teaching of GOD'S pure, unadulterated, unmutilated revelation of His will.

Again, as to the second mark of the Church, let us imagine a community professing to minister the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and yet omitting one of the two essentials, the *form* of words, or the *substance* of the water. Since the Church of all ages and

places, has agreed that without these there is no real Baptism,¹ it is manifest that such a community could not be in the unity of CHRIST's Body. So in regard to the other holy Sacrament, a body of Christians who profess to administer the Body and Blood of our LORD, and yet have none among them duly qualified by the apostolic laying on of hands, are clearly cutting themselves off wilfully from the visible Church.

And if the wrong administration of either Sacrament be, by the act itself, a severance from the body of CHRIST, must we not say the same of the wilful neglect or omission of either?

So that here are rules by which any one who is driven to investigate the question may know the Church of CHRIST throughout the world, and distinguish it without difficulty from bodies of men "not holding the Head," nor being incorporated in the true Vine. If they corrupt the doctrine of CHRIST, if they are wanting in an apostolic priesthood, or other *essential* particular, for the due ministration of those Sacraments by which the Head gives life to His members, then are they out of the visible unity of the Church as a corporate body; and all individuals who go to make up that corporate body

¹ See Rubric at the end of the Form for Private Baptism of Children, where there is an express statement of our own Church on the subject.

are in danger of being without CHRIST, and the benefit of His Atonement. If however these marks are found in any body of men, though there may seem much evil among them, yet may we know that they are not severed from the mystical Body of CHRIST; there may be tares among them, but there is also good corn; and though bad fish are drawn up in the net with the good, yet the net itself is there, the visible Church, and GOD has not altogether deserted that people. Let us pray for such a branch of the Church, that the Husbandman will prune His Vine, and cause it to bring forth more fruit.

When then we each declare "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," when we pray for its "good estate, that it may be guided and governed" by the good Spirit of GOD, and that it may be pleasing to the Divine Majesty "to inspire it continually with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord," let us remember that we speak of the Body mystical of CHRIST, and (by GOD's mercy) of ourselves in particular, His members; let us prize our unity therein as our choicest treasure on earth; and if we may, draw others into the same unity, that peace and goodwill may be perfected through CHRIST. But let no man deceive us, all profession of unity is hollow and worthless, if it be not the unity of the "true Vine."

Moreover let us be comforted and strengthened in

the midst of doubt and weakness, by the certainty that our own Church of England bears upon it all the essential marks of the Body of CHRIST, and is not, as some would persuade us, cut off from visible unity. Day by day she witnesses to the undivided and uncorrupted faith of her LORD, and by an apostolic ministry clearly descended from those on whom the Head of the Church Himself laid His hands, she administers with all essentials of form and substance the two Sacraments of regeneration and renewal. And beyond these, she is bold to mark her communion with Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, and all Saints, by putting their words into the mouths of her children, making their very prayers and songs of rejoicing a token that they are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of GOD. In the sure conviction that our Church joins with the whole body of CHRIST in confessing the one LORD, one Faith, one Baptism of the first ages, let all who faithfully maintain their unity with her, thank GOD that He has given them in His mercy to be branches of the true Vine, and living members incorporate of the LORD JESUS' mystical Body.

Let not any be unsettled or dissatisfied who are sure of their Baptism into this fold of CHRIST. They have been "received into the Body of CHRIST's Church," therefore there is no cause for them to go

hither and thither as some, seeking where is the Church? They have been grafted into the Vine, and made living branches; it is for them to maintain their unity by staying where God has placed them in the Body. He, who having been baptized into this Church of England, believes his Creed, and partakes worthily, with a devout mind, and as often as he can, of the Body and Blood of CHRIST,—that man is not far from the kingdom of God.

While we are in CHRIST, what can we do better than rest upon the promise given to the Church of the captivity, “In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.”¹ When men tempt us to “go down into Egypt, and to flee upon horses,” let us remember that our surest hope is to stand fast where God has willed us to be; if they say, “Lo, here is CHRIST, or, Lo there, go not after them,” for CHRIST is already at your side for every need. Some will point out greater profit in the ministrations of a schismatical community than in our own Church, to worship more attractive, or seemingly more devotional; others will speak of eloquent preaching, or less severe doctrine; others again will plead the spirituality of a formless, yet most formal worship; but think well before you add in your own person to the rents and divisions which pride and restlessness have made in the Body of CHRIST. Let us all

¹ Isa. xxx. 15.

be content to go on in the straight way and the old path, knowing that the older it is, the more it has been trodden by the saints of old, the more likely it is to lead aright at the last.

The more closely then we keep to the Body of CHRIST on earth, the better hope may we have to ascend thither where He, the Head, has gone before. There is a *possibility*,—I will not say how great, or how little,—that if we live up to the light given us we may not be unsafe in bodies of men who have only partially cut themselves off from the visible Church. None can say but that a merciful God will gather many of His elect even from folds where all seem strayed out of His hand. But when He has given us to know that in an apostolic ministry, in the pure Word of God, and in His holy Sacraments, there is not only a *possibility*, but the utmost *certainty* of safety they can have below, to all who will use them faithfully; why should we wash in Abana and Pharpar, waters of our own choice, rather than in that holy river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God?

XIII.

THE HIDDEN UNITY.

S. JOHN xvii. 21.

THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME, AND I IN THEE, THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US.

THE doctrine of the Communion of Saints naturally develops itself from that of the Holy Catholic Church. "Every branch," said JESUS, "that beareth fruit, My FATHER purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." As therefore the visible Church is the Vine before It has passed under the pruning-knife of the husbandman; so the invisible Church or communion of the saints is the same Vine afterwards, in its inner unity of fruitage and perfection.

Perhaps there are no words in the whole Creed which are so often repeated without definite understanding of their meaning as these, "I believe in the Communion of Saints." It is sometimes supposed that intercourse, converse, or external association are implied by this word Communion; whereas its meaning in the Creed is most certainly of an invisible

not a visible bond, by which saints are joined together. The truth may be well illustrated by comparison with a communion of a lower order. When we say that relatives are all of one family, we by no means intend to suggest that they are so because they live in one house, or because they interchange the offices of love. Going before these accidental signs of unity, there is an essential bond of kindred which arises out of their common derivation from one head ; and this is the most real communion of the family. Were one in England, a second in America, and a third in India, the natural relation of the three would be precisely the same as if all were living under one roof. If they had been separated so that conscious intercourse had never taken place, the bond of kindred would be the same ; nor would it be otherwise, though some were numbered among the living, and others among the dead ; for the mystery of even earthly relationship lives in and beyond the grave.

What therefore the bond of kindred is to man's common nature, that the Communion of Saints is in the family of GOD ; it is the living bond of union between the branches of the true Vine ; the hidden fellowship of all who being "called to be saints" in their baptism, continue among the holy children of their heavenly FATHER. And being what it is, a communion arising out of sanctity, it is evident that

as no holy member of CHRIST is excluded from it, none who are unholy can possibly be within its fold ; and it is also evident that it extends to all the holy departed, as well as to the living members of the Church Militant.

As far as this Communion is between saints yet in the body, it must be considered rather by its results, than by any abstract investigation, or practical experience ; for it is with this as with the bond of earthly kindred, we can tell in what they end, but we cannot analyse their nature.

And the chief result is, that none belonging to this holy fellowship can ever think or act as if they stood alone. We often hear it said that personal religion is everything ; and so in one sense it must be, because each of us must work out his own individual salvation with fear and trembling. But personal religion is not to be taken as if it isolated each Christian from his brethren ; rather it joins them all in closer bond together, by uniting them more closely to their one common Head. We are too apt in this day to consider ourselves as each wending his own way to heaven by himself ; and to disregard this great and fundamental truth of Christianity, that whosoever are true branches of the Vine, must be bound to one another by one common interest, and one common spiritual Life. The rule of CHRIST is not independence, but association ; and while we are,

in a manner wasting our strength to no purpose, if we are trying to reach heaven alone, we are husbanding it for the best, if we hide our individuality in the great unity of the Church. Hence Common Prayer has its very foundation in the Communion of Saints. When each who prays offers up his supplications in visible fellowship with the Mystical Body, it is as when a strong man strikes the blow, wielding not alone the strength of a single arm, but of the whole body whereof it is a member. If we take several flames and join them in one, the light of all together is far more than the light of all when separate; so the glory of the Church is manifested infinitely more by the unity of saints, than by their multiplied individuality. Again, when men associate together in any toil, the effect of their united energy is greatly beyond the aggregate of their individual efforts. It seems indeed as if the God of order would teach us by these analogies, how high a value we ought to set on spiritual fellowship in spiritual things, that as it is the law by which men attain great objects in the world, so is it the law of His kingdom by which that kingdom is to be extended, and its light spread abroad, until it fills the earth with His glory.

The Communion of Saints is also a bond of love and attraction; for whoever is united to CHRIST must needs be united to all who are in Him, whoever

are drawn to Him are drawn to each other. As the bonds of our earthly family are such that relatives are drawn together in feeling and sympathy, they cannot tell how or why; so are there insensible affinities in the household of GOD, because the life which is in each member is the life of CHRIST its Head, and if one member suffer or rejoice, all the members rejoice and suffer with it. Hence the highest impulse of a spiritual mind will be an intense desire after a real substantial unity among all who profess themselves members of CHRIST. Such a desire is indeed the spirit of CHRIST Himself diffusing itself among those that are His, so that they pray in His own words that all may be one in the FATHER and in Him, even as the FATHER and SON are One in each other.

And therefore, although the Communion of Saints is invisible except to GOD, we may take a longing for unity as its surest token. They who grieve at schisms, and divided action, and want of love; they who not only grieve at them, but strive, at least in their own persons, and within the limits of their appointed influence, to put an end to them; these are they in whom we may discern marks of the one Communion, the bond of holiness and love. And these are often they who are most harshly judged by the worldly and inconsistent; for the real nature of Christian unity is too often misrepresented or mis-

understood. How frequently is forbearance spoken of as if it, and not truth, were the centre of unity in matters of faith; as if they were the most at one who contrive, for special objects, and at particular seasons, to keep their differences out of sight. But agreement in diversity is very different from unity. The real Communion of the Saints is a bonding together of the whole Church, a sanctifying in faith and practice, of all who profess and call themselves Christians; that they who have been joined to CHRIST in holy Baptism, may continue one with each other: for they “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief corner-stone.” All who long for, and strive after such a fellowship with the saints, taking Apostles and Prophets for their foundation, and the At-one-maker for the bond of unity; these are such as we may well say, have a part here in the Communion of Saints, and will therein be ripened to become fruitful branches in the city above, which is at unity with itself.

But is the unity of the true Vine only an unseen fellowship of Saints on earth? is it not a communion of *all* who are in the At-one-maker, and therefore of those who *rest* in JESUS as well as those who labour in Him? Surely it must be so; for there is no

communion at all except through Him, and the Saints at rest are as much in Him as those on earth. They were living branches in the Church Militant, they are living branches still in the Church of Paradise. Are they branches and we too, and have we not a mutual fellowship through that which each has in the Vine? Is CHRIST the Head over all, over the Church of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and all Saints who have gone to rest long ago; over the Church Militant in the East and in the West, here in England, afar off in the islands of the Pacific, or on the Western Continent; and are those above and below as members at variance in the body? It cannot be so, for the bonds which bind together the invisible Church are not severed by death. GOD is the FATHER of the Saints at rest, and we too are His children, by adoption sealed in the Incarnation of His SON. We who are on earth trust to the redemption which His Blood has accomplished, and in Him we have our spiritual life; they who are gone to rest have attained that rest by the same redemption, they live by the same life. The very grace given to the Saints in Paradise is the same which was given to them when they were on earth, and which is given to us; the very glory of which they now partake, we hope hereafter to inherit as God's dear children. Whether therefore their probation was ended long ago, or whether it is still

going on, all holy men of GOD are bound together in a bond which sin can break, but death cannot; a bond whose duration is as lasting as their fellowship with GOD "the FATHER, and with His SON JESUS CHRIST." Therefore S. Paul says, "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to GOD the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to JESUS the Mediator of the New Covenant. . . ."¹

And for this reason also the Church keeps her Saints in memory,—Apostles and Evangelists, John Baptist, and the blessed Mary, and all Saints, that we may never lose sight of the perfect unity which we have in CHRIST JESUS; we in this world, and they in the world unseen, each bound up with Him, and all with one another. For such an unity is the surest of all. The unity of the body on earth is still subject to assaults of the adversary, to schisms, and want of charity, and coldness of zeal; but the unity of the Church Militant with the Saints above is free from these. They are beyond the reach of all weakness and sin, and have already entered upon that state of holiness which knows no degeneracy, but goes forward to perfect consummation in the glory of

¹ Heb. xii. 22, 23.

heaven. Have we known what it is to be in the society of some very saintly person ; or more, to have a tie of kindred and love with them, and have we not known that such a tie, and companionship was a high privilege to us, and by God's mercy a source of spiritual advancement and comfort ? Even so is it with the Church on earth in her strivings to draw closer her communion with the saints above, for she knows that the holiness of "just men made perfect" will be to her an example, and as it were a contagion of holiness, by which the sanctity of her children will be set forward.

What indeed is the exact extent of their present relations to the visible body of CHRIST we cannot tell. All we can feel sure of is that in the communion of Saints, those who are at rest have still an interest in those who are under probation. We do not pray to them, but we trust that they pray for us : and as "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," so do we hope that it will avail more when he that prays is freed from the incumbrance of the flesh, and the bowing down of sin. Not indeed that their intercessions on our behalf may be supposed to consist of detailed prayers founded on minute knowledge of our present condition. But as the souls under the altar cry, "LORD, how long ?"¹ as the whole Church above prays for the

¹ Rev. vi. 10.

Church below, that its waiting may soon draw to an end, so may we believe does every individual saint who has departed in CHRIST carry with him the recollection of those he has left behind, and his tender solicitude for their final perseverance and salvation. The angels know of and rejoice over every sinner that repenteth. Even Dives lying in torments had some care for his brethren, lest they also should come there. And shall not brethren in Paradise pray for brethren that they too may enter into rest?

In heaven, it is true, there will be no more prayer, for there will be nothing more to ask; but in Paradise the Church is a waiting Church as well as on earth; and though its members have no more need to pray on their own behalf, it cannot be doubted that they join in fellowship with us, and pray that we with them may be made perfect. Nor need we fear that such a belief makes their intercessions seem to come between CHRIST and our souls, any more than when we speak of, and ask for the prayers of our friends and relations still in the flesh. As the prayers of earth are accepted of GOD the FATHER only in and through the Name of the At-one-maker, so is it with the prayers of Paradise, and they who are there do but continue in their state of rest, the intercessions which they raised before GOD in the day of their probation; the mother, it may be, for

her little ones, the wife or husband for the partner left behind, the shepherd for his flock, the saints of all ages for the whole Church in its continued warfare. The time is not far distant when the distinction of visible and invisible will have passed away, and all saints will be gathered into one fold together. Then the communion of saints will have attained its full perfection and glory, there will be no fruitless branches at all in the Vine, for the Husbandman will have made an end of pruning, and the Vintage will have been gathered in, fruit meet for the kingdom of God. But till that time come the prayers of Paradise and those of earth mingle in one ever flowing stream, and ascend as holy incense before the throne.

And even now in the earthly part of the holy unity we may sometimes gain a glimpse of the promised land. Looking from the Eucharistic altar as Moses did from Pisgah, leaving behind us the toils and cares, the pleasures and sorrows of this world, and reaching forward to that better land, breaking off from our contact with things belonging only to this life, we do as it were join ourselves on to the hindmost ranks of that vast army whose van-guard has already entered into rest. The frame of mind which all earnest persons thus strive to attain at the time when they partake in the sacrament of the altar, is the type of what they ought to be always, and the

nearer they approach to a continual sense of their union with their dear REDEEMER, so much the more is their hold strengthened in the Communion of Saints.

It is good for us then to call to mind often our privilege, and as men boast of their families and lineage, to look upon the Cross and remember by that badge of a divine heraldry our high and heavenly calling to the fellowship of the invisible Church, the household of the living GOD. As a great cloud of witnesses, His holy ones, the children of His love encompass us all around; some there are known to all the Church, some near and dear to our own branch of it, some within a yet narrower circle, with whom we have held sweet converse, and walked in the house of GOD as friends. By realising their continued existence as members of the same mystical Body to which we are joined, by looking on them and ourselves as being each a part of that stream ever flowing from earth to heaven, whereof a portion is far on its way to the promised land, some now crossing Jordan, others yet in the midst of the desert; we may appreciate more vividly and practically our actual position as members of CHRIST in the array of His unseen kingdom.

And while we take comfort from this consideration of a permanent union through Him Who makes all at one between us and our departed friends, or the

saints whose very names we venerate, there is also room for much lawful joy and rest in the conviction of their unfading interest in us. Even as we think ourselves happy in having friends on earth, on whose sympathy and prayers we can rely, so may we strengthen ourselves with the intercessions of the saints for all the Church, and rely on that sympathy of CHRIST the Head, which pervades all the members of His mystical Body on earth and in Paradise.

Let us believe in the Communion of Saints, and we can never feel isolated as to ourselves, or unsympathising in respect to others; let us take it to our heart, and we shall think of our friends whose place knows them no more, as being still present to us in the LORD. Only let our "conversation" be "already in heaven," and we shall realize that the probation of this life is itself a step upward in the way to the everlasting hills. If we are CHRIST'S we cannot be alone; let us therefore clear our eyesight from the mists of unbelief, or rationalizing doubt, that we may perceive how we and all the saints are, as it were, woven into a web of unbroken fellowship, the whole fabric whereof is the mystical Body of the LORD.

And when called upon to take part in the active charities of the Christian life; remembering how our hidden unity is founded in our visible unity, not the visible in that which is unseen; let our yearnings

after the unity of Christians be measured by the unity of CHRIST, in His Mystical Body, the Church, that no false glare of a light seemingly more near, may draw off our eyes from the Sun of Righteousness, Whose Body is the One and Only Light of the world, and in Whose light only are Life and Love.

XIV.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ATONEMENT.¹

S. JOHN XX. 21.

AS MY FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU.

HAD it been in accordance with the justice and wisdom of Him Who is essentially just and wise, to forgive by a single act of mercy, the sin of which our first parents were guilty; in this one act of forgiveness, so far as we can discern, would have been comprehended the restoration of all mankind. But, because such an act had no place in the order of His mysterious providence, therefore the forgiveness of sin has become a matter of individual necessity in the case of every sinner who is to regain the place which he at first held as his natural heritage. And, as it is an individual necessity on the part of the sinner, so on the part of the Absolver, the forgiveness frames itself into a separate act towards each separate person forgiven. And as “in Adam all die,”—as by the personal relation which we each of us bear to

¹ δόντος ἡμῖν τὴν διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς.—2 Cor. v. 18.

Adam, we each of us participate in his punishment and degeneracy ; so “in CHRIST shall all be made alive ;” the law of forgiveness and exaltation being equally founded in personal relation.

It was to accomplish this work that the SON of GOD was “sent” into the world by the FATHER ; it is this work, that the HOLY GHOST coming from the FATHER and the SON, has ever since been perfecting in the Church. CHRIST came to make GOD and man AT-ONE who were at variance by the Fall ; His incarnation and sufferings, and the ministrations founded therein, are all to this end, that men may be reconciled to GOD by the forgiveness of their sins. “In CHRIST we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace,”¹ and “the blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth from all sin.”² Therefore the Atonement which the At-one-Maker has made is sufficient for the reconciliation of every sinner to GOD, provided that sinner be brought within its power. But in this, as in all His works, the ALMIGHTY has, (to speak reverently,) imposed on Himself laws and limits ; as He forgives sinners, not by an omnipotent act of mercy, but through the Atonement ; so He forgives not all sinners, but those only who seek His mercy through the At-one-Maker. And this law resolves itself into the principle so often enunciated,

¹ Eph. i. 7.

² 1 S. John i. 7.

that since God has ordained certain means or instruments for the salvation of men, those alone are saved who use the means appointed.

Sin then is the great obstacle which hinders our approach to heaven, and the Atonement wrought by and in the Person of JESUS, has provided the means for its removal. But as sin was not at once forgiven to all mankind in the person of Adam; so were not all men at once and for ever forgiven in the blood of CHRIST. From first to last, the restoration of our nature is a gradual work waiting God's appointed time; and in the same manner also is the restoration of our individual persons gradual, wrought in the appointed way.

Observe, then, how sin stands in the way of our restoration.—

I. First, at the very entrance of life. Each generation comes into the world in the likeness of that which went before; and hence as all men trace the configuration of their bodies by the lineage of Adam, assuming at once that the external form of every individual coming into the world is regulated by the general characteristics of the first of his race; so in respect to our spiritual conformation, we are all born in the likeness of those who preceded us, and our spiritual nature is what it is, because it was the nature of Adam when he begat sons in his likeness.

We are therefore, sinners from our birth, quite

independently of any sins committed by us. We can no more come into the world without a sinful nature, than we can without a nature of flesh and blood; seeing both are the inevitable inheritance belonging to our lineage in Adam. It is hard indeed to believe that what we are so accustomed to speak of as "innocent infancy," should ever be in a state of alienation from God; but must we not believe many other laws of His kingdom which seem equally strange to the eye of reason? Besides, when we speak of the innocence of infancy, do we mean *absolute innocence*, or do we compare it with other and plainly sinful periods of life? If we speak of it as *absolute*, representing it as innocence in the sight of God, where is the law and standard by which we measure it? Moreover, the seeming difficulty almost entirely vanishes, if we take this inborn sinful nature, not by itself, but in connection with the other parts of God's providential arrangement. As He is not a God of Mercy only, so neither is He a God of Justice alone; and He has given us means in His Mercy by which this sinful nature may be made holy, as surely as He has by His Justice entailed it upon us in our birth. Having included all under sin in Adam, He has opened to them a fountain for uncleanness in the blood of CHRIST.

II. And beyond the natural degeneration for which all men are accounted sinners; there are countless

acts, thoughts, and words which have the nature of sin, and for which we must seek forgiveness through the mercy of God in the Atonement. From childhood to old age every Christian is daily transgressing in larger or lesser degree against the law of God. Even those who endeavour faithfully to live up to their profession, are humbled in the dust before Him Who tries the very hearts and reins of men, when they think upon their manifold omissions of duty, their weaknesses, their want of zeal, their sometimes more deadly sins against the light of conscience. And others, unaccustomed to strict self-examination, are yet aware by occasional reflection upon their lives, that they are made up of sin occasionally interrupted by good thoughts or deeds, rather than of constant obedience to the law of their Christian calling. These therefore,—and if we add more wilful and perverse sinners, these include all classes of men,—stand from day to day, and from hour to hour, in such a position, that only the *forgiveness* of sin, not the *absence* of sin can give them a title to heaven.

Hence it follows, that from the hour of his entrance upon the probation of this life, until that probation is ended, there is no period in any man's existence when he does not need the application to his own individual self of that Atonement by which alone the righteous God is reconciled with the sinning man.

Now this twofold nature of sin plainly requires a

twofold means by which its forgiveness through the blood of the At-one-Maker may be wrought. The sin of our nature entails an *involuntary* alienation from God, which goes before the alienation arising out of the sins to which our wills have consented. A merciful provision is therefore made for reconciliation, independent of the will, in holy Baptism, as well as for that dependent upon it, in repentance. And if we rightly estimate the condition into which our nature has been brought by the Fall, remembering that it is only by the interposition of the Atonement that *any* restoration can take place; we shall understand how the forgiveness of sin came to be expressed in the Nicene Creed, as “one Baptism for the remission of sins;” for it is plain that all forgiveness must depend upon this which is first of all; that so long as the birth-sin is unforgiven we have no part in the covenant of the Atonement, and we know not in what to rest any hope for salvation.¹ Moreover, it must be regarded as a most merciful provision that so essential a remedy for the fall does not rest in the will or consciousness of the sinner; for if it required prayer or any other act of the will on his part, where could we look for the reconciliation to God of all those who are taken out of this life before their consciousness can develope itself in action, or their lips utter words of prayer?

¹ See note at p. 205.

Here then, we begin to realize the force of our LORD's words. "As My FATHER hath sent Me, so send I you." It was to remedy the Fall that He came into the world, that those who were once far off from GOD might be reconciled by the blood of His dear SON. But since He came to work a cure in men of all times;—not on those only who should happen to be on earth at the day of His ministration, but on those who should ever be brought under condemnation;—He sent others as the FATHER had sent Him, to continue in His Name the work which He had begun in His own Person; and by the power committed to them, to convey unto sinners that forgiveness of sins which He Himself conferred by the indwelling power of GOD. Such are His words: "As My FATHER hath sent Me, so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the HOLY GHOST; Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." And so He gave to certain men, then representing the Church, the power of remitting our birth-sin as well as other; that the work of mercy might not slacken, nor His fold lack sheep till the day of His second coming.

But the majority of mankind require forgiveness beyond that of inborn sin. After we have been made at-one with GOD by forgiveness in holy Bap-

tism, we are most of us,—all indeed who live up to years which entail moral responsibility—alienated from Him again, more or less, by the many actual sins of which, in our own persons, and by our own will, we are guilty. And in respect to these also the forgiveness follows the analogy of grace.

As the birth sin which is acquired without any act on the part of the sinner, is forgiven without any, so when the sin is actual, or dependent on the sinner's will, the forgiveness must be so dependent likewise. For sins, therefore, which we commit by wilfulness or want of watching, at any time after Baptism, there is required something on our part before the Atonement can be applied to our souls: and that something is repentance. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." For if we do not repent and turn to GOD, how can we expect that He will turn to us? Yet even repentance is a gift coming from GOD; and hence we may well believe that it is a grace grafted upon our regeneration; that having been once made the children of "OUR FATHER," we have been so drawn into His family that only a course of the deepest and most reckless sinning can root out of our heart that love which He has planted there for the purpose of drawing us ever nearer to Himself. It takes much to sever entirely the bonds of natural affection between a child and his parent; and even after years of aliena-

tion there yet remains a hidden spark of the first love which circumstances will kindle into a lively flame. So by the infinite mercy of God that grace which He has placed within us, we cannot easily drive out or destroy. The fire is hidden, but it is not quenched; and when by any dispensation of His providence He fans the smoking flax, our very first thought of repentance is based upon the relationship which He has established in our Baptism,—“I will go to My FATHER.” Thus, when we come to see the true nature of sin; how its essential property is to alienate us from God; if we reach thus far, we must see that nothing short of sorrow for our wrong-doing; confession; a real purpose to amend; faith in the power of CHRIST to make us at-one with God who have been alienated; that nothing short of these can be an acceptable movement on our part toward reconciliation. They must too, be our daily work, for we are sinning daily, and falling short in the measure of our duties toward God and man. And therefore, though we have once for all received Baptism for the remission of sins,—Baptism wherein original sin was washed away, and grace implanted for holy and penitent living for the future; yet do we need continual renewals of repentance, that our constant falls may not end in a final declension beyond the reach of forgiveness.

But we have this good hope before us, that God

“hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth;” and if by the words of our lips and the acts of our will, “we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” by the blood of the Atonement. If we, on our part, repent, He, on His part, will administer forgiveness; reconciling us to Himself by His SON through Whom alone sin can be pardoned. Yet how can this be known? Not now as in old time is the voice of GOD heard from heaven proclaiming Himself “The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious;”¹ not now is the Son of Man upon earth to minister the words of absolution, “Thy sins be forgiven thee;” yet does the Church, wherein is the invisible presence of GOD, proclaim and minister the mercy of the FATHER, and the grace of the SON, by virtue of the power given to her eighteen hundred years ago.² “As My FATHER hath sent Me, so send I you . . . Whosoever sins ye remit, they

¹ Exod. xxxiv. 6.

² A few words may be added in this place, to answer an objection often made, that if the power of forgiveness was bestowed upon the Church of all ages because it was bestowed on the Apostles, why has not the gift of tongues descended likewise? It must be remembered that the latter gift was for a very special purpose; the foundation of the Church among *many* nations by individuals chosen exclusively out of *one* nation. The necessity for such a gift must soon have passed away; but if remission of sin by the ministry of men was necessary in Apostolic days, it is necessary now, and will be as long as there are sinners to be forgiven.

are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." As she teaches us to believe and acknowledge that God has committed unto her, "One Baptism for the remission of sins," especially of that sin through which we are by nature children of wrath; so does she teach us day by day at the offering of her morning and evening sacrifice, that "Almighty God, the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST . . . hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins."¹ According to which belief, when her priests are set apart in these words: "Receive the HOLY GHOST for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of hands;" she adds also the words of her LORD, "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."² And these to whom such solemn words are spoken, do almost daily, in the exercise of that power, convey to penitent sinners the forgiveness wrought by our great High Priest; the mercy which we acknowledge in the Creed when we each say, "I believe . . . in the forgiveness of sins."

Of what importance then, for good or evil, are the words of absolution; and how do they teach us the

¹ "*Power*" as well as "*commandment*."

² See Ordination of Priests.

necessity all of us are under of knowing what we hear, and utter ; that if they are good and true words, we may not fall short of the benefit to be gained by them ; if otherwise, that we may not add sin to sin by means of them. For if these words are true, then they really do that which they profess to do ; convey to *penitent* sinners, forgiveness through JESUS CHRIST. If they are vain words, then does every one who uses them, make a most wicked pretence of power, whose reality is the most awful that can be imagined.

But who can doubt the goodness and truth of these words, which the Church has put into the mouths of the priests, and obliged them to use, for so many centuries ; and which vast multitudes of saints have used, believed, and trusted in ? None probably would doubt, if it were not for weak faith in the Absolver through Whom all gifts and graces flow down to the Church ; and by Whose Atonement alone we can receive remission of sins. The rule of CHRIST is “ According to thy faith, be it unto thee.” There is an unwillingness in some to believe that God wills to convey His blessings by any earthly channel ; and even their reverence for the gift itself tends to strengthen this unwillingness. But let them remember in what “ earthen vessels” His treasures have oftentimes been stored ; how Balaam was a prophet, foretelling the joy of all nations, and

Judas an apostle, ministering highest gifts among men; how in the days of His flesh, He made even the hem of His garment a vehicle of His Divine power. If the foulness of the channel did not spoil the virtue of the stream in days gone by, why should it now? If insensate objects were the appointed instruments for communicating grace, how much rather the ministers of His Church?

However worthless a tool may be by itself, it assumes a reality and importance in the hands of its master; becoming as it were for the time, a part of himself whereby he moulds the rough block into form and beauty. Even so, the ministers of CHRIST are in His hands, the earthly means and extension of His power,—it may be, as the tool, to be “cast away” when their work is done,—by whom He is moulding the elect of GOD into the restored likeness, stamping His Image upon them, making them vessels of honour, shapen in beauty, meet for the Master’s table.

Moreover, let us not overthrow “the proportion of faith,”¹ by taking any article of belief as if it stood alone. If we identify the Holy Catholic Church with the mystical Body of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; if we observe how it is the means by which He is extending to all, that salvation which in His own Person He offered only to a few; then we shall have

¹ Rom. xii. 6.

less difficulty in apprehending the forgiveness of sin conveyed by means of His ministers, as His own very work, and none other.

The practical end of all is this. That we who have received in our Baptism the forgiveness of original sin, should ever be striving from day to day, to attain that state in which we may hope to receive the full benefit of those other means of grace by which our daily falls are forgiven. Repentance must precede absolution; but repentance is no easy work; therefore it is best not to throw obstacles in the way of our forgiveness, by the accumulation of unrepented sin. What will the daily absolution avail, if the daily confession is not applied so as to take in the manifold detail of our sins? Or how can we expect to receive the full grace of the Eucharistic absolution, when we come thereto with the imperfectly remembered sins of a month gone by? It is better to live in a continual carefulness about sin, and especially those sins accounted venial, than to have a load of care which cannot be removed, in the day when absolution is over for ever. And, lastly, we must believe that God really does work out the work of our salvation by means of intermediate channels, and not of direct inspiration. We must be willing to walk by faith, and not by sight. We must look beyond the instruments used, to Him Who uses them, and strive to recognize His continual Presence

in and by the Church, Who hath in His own self power to forgive sins. So shall we be assured that, working by such unworthy means as He has seen fit to choose, He is preparing the Church Militant on earth, for its place in His kingdom above; that by the forgiveness of inborn sin through the ministry of water and the HOLY GHOST, He is ever adding to the fold of His visible Body; that by the absolution of repenting sinners, He is drawing the baptized within the compass of His inner fold, and joining them to His invisible flock, the Communion of Saints.

Note.—When the doctrine of Holy Baptism is taught, as here and elsewhere throughout these pages, in *its simplicity*, as being the only revealed gate of salvation, it is almost sure to be applied by the reader or hearer to some individual case which has come within the compass of his own knowledge; and then it often raises thoughts respecting those departed this life, which are very painful to dwell upon. In such cases it is well to reflect:—

1. That the law of GOD respecting this Sacrament is given to us for our practical guidance, not as a means of judging whether any are, or are not saved; but as far as this law is revealed for such a purpose, it entails upon us the utmost strictness respecting the necessity of Holy Baptism.

2. That uncertainty as to the condition of unbaptized persons departed does in reality add nothing to the uncertainty in which, at the best we *must* be, as to the condition of all, even the baptized. Our blessed LORD's words (S. John iii. 3, 5,) are clear enough for the living; the dead we must leave,—as ever,—to the unrestricted Mercy of a GOD Whose Justice is founded in Love.

XV.

THE LIKENESS OF THE HEAVENLY.

1 COR. xv. 49.

AS WE HAVE BORNE THE IMAGE OF THE EARTHY, WE SHALL
ALSO BEAR THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY.

It is one of the privileges of our faith to know that the At-one-Maker did not limit His work to the souls of men, but poured out the grace of restoration upon that whole humanity, visible and invisible, which had come under the curse of the Fall. As in the soul all forms and degrees of sin, are only—so to speak,—developements of one principle; so the various phases in which disease and decay show themselves in the body, are all gathered, step by step, into the unity of death. And when the SON of GOD took unto Him the soul and body of man, bearing them both through the victory of the grave to the high places of heaven, He overcame this downward tendency of our nature, giving to it in all its parts a capacity for inheriting glory. Therefore may each one of us who lives and dies in CHRIST

rejoice in this confidence, that "though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

The traditions of elder days shed many a ray from God's holy truth upon the wise and discerning among the heathen; and some such far-off light showed them that the soul when it parted from the body, must still live on in a continuation of its former being and consciousness. But they thought of a future life only as of the existence of spirits; having no ground of hope that the relics of the departed would ever rise again and rejoin themselves to that which had once given them power and beauty. One of the greatest of their natural philosophers has left his opinion on record, that to restore life to the dead body is beyond the power of the ALMIGHTY; and others before him, even their wisest, considered the visible part of man's nature to be something extraneous to himself, which he puts away at death, as the insect casts its skin, to part with it for ever.

Nor among God's own enlightened people was there, in general, more than a vague perception of a resurrection, other than the rising of the soul from earth to heaven. Here and there indeed might be one whose obedience had in some degree drawn away the veil from futurity; and he could exclaim in the midst of his suffering, that after all the scourging of his flesh, and even after its corruption in the grave,

it should yet carry him to the vision of God. And prophets learned such words as these: "Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead Body shall they arise;"¹ or else beheld a symbol and a foreshadowing of the great Resurrection in the valley of dry bones.

It may indeed be doubted if even these holy men knew all the meaning of what they heard and saw; but whether or not, certain it is that others were accustomed to take these revelations, either as mysteries not to be penetrated by our present understandings, or else as parables in which the soul was represented under the figure of the body. So far was it from the thoughts of any, that the very flesh in which men live on earth, should hereafter live again, to die no more.

And wonder not that both Jews and Heathen were so blind in this matter. They had around them endless examples of the *power* of death, but they had no proof of his weakness. Who mightier in their eyes than death? They beheld the strongest brought down in a moment by his stroke; the vigour of the most stalwart manhood vanishing before him after a few short years; the beauty of the fairest turned to ashes. Whatever was noble or lovely in the outward aspect of humanity, they saw must all come to the same end. And while in other parts of nature,

¹ Isaiah xxvi. 19.

their senses could trace not only the decay, but the reproduction, so that when they put seed into the ground to die, they knew it would spring up again before long in the same form,—with the bodies of men they only saw this, that they went down to the grave, and became as the earth around them; that they were consumed in the flames, and passed out of visible being.

Was it, then, marvellous that men who had not seen the Conqueror of Death, should think his power supreme? Was it not rather, natural for them thus to think, that though the immaterial soul could not be dissolved, yet its separation from the body ended in the complete destruction of the latter? And so they said, that the flowers of the field which died away in the autumn would rise to life again in the spring; but that the flesh of man, when it went to the grave, was destined to perish for ever.

In God's own time and way the truth was revealed, and "life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel."¹ The At-one-Maker showed His power not only "to forgive sins," but also to set aside all its consequences, and especially that most universal one of all, the death of the body. By word and act He proved that death and the grave were entirely under His control. "As the FATHER," said He, "raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; so the

¹ 2 Tim. i. 10.

SON quickeneth whom He will." "I am the Resurrection and the Life."¹ And that men might not have His word only, He vouchsafed them visible tokens of His power, raising the dead to life not only as some of the prophets of old had done, when life had but just departed, but triumphing over death in all its stages. In the chamber of Jairus' little daughter the soul might even yet be thought to be lingering about its former tabernacle, and some might doubt if it were any great and Divine work to bring them together again; but at the gate of Nain, death had so long done his work, that they were giving up his prey to the grave; and more certainly still at the tomb of Lazarus, four days dead, all the comeliness of life was turned into corruption. Yet in each of these, death and the grave owned their Conqueror's Presence and gave up their captives at His word.

It may have been also for the further confirmation of this truth, and to show the close relation between the Head and all His members, that when the "Flesh which saw no corruption" arose from the grave, It did not arise alone; for, "The graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."² Thus it may be, would the LORD of Life teach His

¹ S. John v. 21; xi. 25.

² S. Matt. xxvii. 52.

Church, that not only did His work of Atonement rescue our souls from hell, but also our bodies from the power of the grave. "Thus saith the LORD GOD unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live."¹

But the brightest light of all He shed from His own Person. His words had declared the mystery, and His miracles had illustrated it; but His own Resurrection furnished the key by which it was to be understood. Many looked upon His blessed Body and saw it bruised, torn, and dead upon the cross; and those who reverently embalmed It with their costly offering, knew how It too had seemed to bow in feebleness beneath the stroke of death. Yet, scarce three days had gone, when It appeared among them again, restored to strength and beauty, bearing the tokens of His Passion, but no longer of the weakness by which He had owned Himself "perfect Man." One of the Evangelists records that He appeared before them "in another form," teaching them doubtless by a second transfiguration that "this corruptible must put on incorruptible, and this mortal must put on immortality:"² that though they had seen Lazarus rising in the same form of body to die again, yet was there "another form," a body free for ever from the power of death, which should be glorified in due time, in heaven.

¹ Ezekiel xxxvii. 5.

² 1 Cor. xv. 53.

Henceforth there was no darkness before the eyes, nor anguish in the mind, concerning the fate of our mortal flesh. The Apostles went forth "preaching JESUS and the Resurrection;"¹ and although "some mocked, and others said, "We will hear thee again of this matter," yet they boldly continued to declare, "He that raised up CHRIST from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."²

Considering the many consolations which flow from this doctrine, it might have reasonably been supposed that all who heard it would be ready to believe and receive it with joy. In disease, in the infirmity of old age, and indeed in all the ordinary weaknesses of the flesh, the eye of faith could look forward to a time when decay and weakness would no longer be inseparable from life, and when "this light affliction, which is but for a moment," would give way to a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Yet there were some calling themselves Christians who were unwilling to receive such good hope as this that the LORD and His Apostles set before them. Thus, two are named by S. Paul, who taught that "the resurrection was past already;"³ meaning, as is supposed, that the language in which the resurrection was spoken of, had a symbolical

¹ Acts xvii. 18.

² Rom. viii. 11.

³ 2 Tim. ii. 18.

meaning, referring to nothing more than the revival of the soul from the death of sin and the grave of the old man, to spiritual life in CHRIST. And, again, to the Corinthian Church S. Paul writes, "How say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?"¹ Against such gainsayers as these the Apostle of the Gentiles was inspired to record that clear and positive definition of this doctrine which is in the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians. From the repetition and detail which this chapter contains, it is evident that the Apostle wrote for the conviction of those who believe in general terms that all men will appear before CHRIST our Judge at the last day, but yet do not believe that there will then take place a reunion between the very souls and bodies wherewith they sinned or served God on earth. He declares the identity of those who die and those who rise again, he speaks of the risen body, not as of one *like* to that which each possessed in the day of his probation, but as the very same; "*It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.*"² He does not say "the corruptible body was put in the ground and dissolved, and at the resurrection God will create another which shall be incorruptible," but plainly that such a change passes over the body which was dissolved, that it is made incorruptible and immortal.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 12.² 1 Cor. xv. 42.

And what are his words but a reassertion of that truth which our blessed LORD Himself had declared and illustrated, and manifested in His own person?

Truly this is a "great mystery," and acceptable only to that faith which receives the truth of GOD without question because it is His. There will doubtless ever be those who will ask, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?"¹ But for Christian Sadduceeism, as for Jewish and Heathen, there is ever an unanswerable argument ready in the words of the great Apostle, drawn from the analogy of nature. "What," he seems to say, "do you continually see the corn fields springing up from bare grain cast into the ground to decay, and can you doubt the power of GOD to raise in like manner the bodies of His sleeping saints? Will you doubt, because you cannot explain? how then shall you believe all mysteries?" So should we ever make answer in the simplicity of faith to those who at this day would raise "oppositions of science, falsely so called," against the doctrine of CHRIST. It is not for us who can see so little way into the interior working of the natural world, to make the resurrection of the body a question of philosophical inquiry; to doubt it, or even to endeavour to explain it on any principles, or supposed principles of elementary dissolution and reunion, of chemical change

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 35.

and reproduction. When we cannot tell what our life is, nor say how it comes or goes in these bodies that we now have, who are we that we should not be satisfied to believe there is still a greater wonder in the life beyond that grave which as yet sets bounds to all our experience? He Who created us at first from the dust in all the strength and beauty of manhood, can as surely bring to pass the latter work as the former, and renew those bodies for His own glory in the day of His appearing.

And now let us consider some of the ways in which this doctrine bears upon our present state, and the great work of our probation. The resurrection of the body is not set forth only for the consolation of the saints, but also for the warning and conversion of the unholy. CHRIST came once to redeem the bodily as well as the spiritual nature of men, so will He also come a second time to judge both the one and the other. "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."¹ And as the very frame in which we have lived on earth shall rise again at the Judgment to receive the sentence of sin, or the award of righteousness; so, clothed in immortal flesh sinners shall "depart into outer darkness," and saints "enter into the

¹ 2 Cor. v. 10.

joy of their LORD." "Fear not them," said our merciful SAVIOUR, "which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."¹

Now so far as fear can draw men out of their sins, the fear of punishment inflicted on the body is one which comes more home to our present condition and feelings, than that of punishment to the soul alone. What the one is we know and see, its sense of pain is a matter of daily experience, and from such knowledge and experience we do, in some sort, reason upward intuitively to an appreciation of unceasing agony in an undying body. But the immaterial soul seems, to faculties practised little in the contemplation of spiritual realities, as if it were removed beyond the range of such things as now give us pain. And because such unreal reasoning persuades us that fire cannot hurt the soul, or the worm prey upon it, therefore "the terrors of the LORD" appear mitigated, and we comfort ourselves with the pretence of symbolical meaning, when we read of the fire never quenched, the worm that never dies, the binding of hand and foot, the utter darkness, the weeping and gnashing of teeth, by which are represented to us the pains of hell. Hence some who would feel but little fear, if they foresaw that the soul would rise by itself to the

¹ S. Matt. x. 28.

judgment and vengeance of God, may be brought to conviction by the truth of a bodily resurrection, a bodily judgment, and a bodily agony eternal.

Moreover, to pass from fear to higher qualities, does not this truth teach us that we should entertain a sort of reverence both for our bodies and those of all Christians? Not only are they, as all other creatures, the handiwork of the Creator, but in them is specially manifested the unmeasured love of God Who has provided for them also a place in His new creation. Not only the soul, but the flesh of man too did the SON of God take unto Him ; and even to this day, and to the world's end, dwelling in all His members by that blessed Spirit which He sent into His Church, He sanctifies our bodies to Himself for ever. So amid all the corruptions and seductions of the world, our bodies as well as our souls are endowed with grace, that they may attain such a measure of holiness as may fit them for the day of the LORD's coming, and for the purity of His kingdom. Already the quickening of the Son of Man has begun to be wrought in us ; already are they made the temple of the Sanctifier ; already are they joined in union with that Body undefiled and glorified which marks the end of our hopes, and the pinnacle of our joys. How then shall we defile that which God has made pure, how shall we take the members of CHRIST and make them members of sin, how shall

we quench the holy fire of eternal quickening which the SON of GOD has already lighted up in our bodies ?

And as the blessed hope of a resurrection for the flesh should lead us to look on the living bodies of Christians as already dedicated for heaven, so should it move us to awe and reverence in respect to the tabernacles of the departed, as being, in some sort of this world no longer. These are they which in the time appointed shall be changed into the likeness of His glorious body Who now sits at the right hand of the FATHER ; good reason is there, then, why we should not be careless and irreverent towards them ; why we should claim them as our own no longer, but give them to the keeping of GOD in the place set apart for His honour ; why we should lay them down in their resting places with holy ceremony as offering them anew an oblation to Him. We respect them, not alone because they had our love when they were in life and beauty, but because they are now consecrated and set apart to GOD, and to do otherwise would be sacrilege against Him.

Further, the consolations of this blessed doctrine are manifold. If any are watching by the bedside of one they love during the course of a long continued sickness, how can they trace the mark of the grave upon the dissolving body ! Strength departs, beauty withers ; even before the closing scene it may be that what was ever fair to look upon becomes,

except for our love, an object of loathing. Need any who has the hope of a Christian dwell on such memories? shall he not rather set them aside as an unfaithful picture of the beloved reality, and look only on the renovated beauty of the resurrection? Remember how the Holy One was scourged, and bruised, and "His visage marred more than any man's," and yet the resurrection transfigured into beauty all the tokens of His passion. So let us comfort ourselves concerning the natural body which is wasting and decaying in our very sight, knowing that it is already going on to become a spiritual body for ever, its corruptible turned into incorruption, its weakness into power, its dishonour into glory.

And at the last, when the soul has gone hence, let us not hide our faith in the resurrection under the unsightly veil of heathenish pageants. What our hopes are, those let us declare by fitting symbols, giving expression not only to the natural grief of bereavement, but also to the comfort of faith. Why should we mark the graves of the departed with broken columns and ghastly memorials of decay, as if their hope was cut off, and the tomb their final rest? Is it not better to lift our eyes upward and point to their home beyond, to place over them the token of their faith and ours, that through the grave and gate of death is the way to our joyful resurrection? Surely the Cross upon a grave appeals to

every cross-bearer of CHRIST in the very language of humility and hope, seeming as if it spoke to us in the voice of each one who lies beneath its shadow, "O, LORD, in Thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded."

And, lastly, when death and the grave have done their worst, when we have buried our dead out of our sight, when their forms and countenances are but dimly pictured to our eyes, let us not be pained at the weakness of our memory as if it should fail us hereafter. Mutual recognition in the courts of heaven will not follow the laws of our present being, and be dependent on memory, but will arise out of that strong instinct and intuition by which faith and our lower faculties must be superseded in the kingdom of the regeneration. Why should we have the least doubt concerning the future recognition of those we love? Is it anywhere said that we shall not know them? Or are we without the least indication given to us that we shall? Did not Mary and the Disciples know the LORD when He appeared to them after His resurrection, and shall not we know Him also in the day of His appearing? Was there not mutual recognition between Lazarus and his sisters, or between the widow and her son, and shall that have been in their first resurrection on earth, which will not in their second and more perfect one in heaven? Surely, to say the least, since God has

made our bodies capable of the resurrection, He has not eternally sundered the relationships which are derived from them. He Himself has signed us with the signature of brother, sister, mother, father, child, wife, and husband; and the handwriting which He has put upon us can no more be blotted out, than we ourselves can be erased from the face of His creation.

If, then, these things be so, let us not dishonour God, and cheat ourselves of our good hope, by slighting this article of our holy faith. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?"¹ It is enough for us to know that we are members of CHRIST, and that our bodies are quickened by Him Who is the First-fruits of the Resurrection, and Who has already carried our bodily nature to a place in heaven.

Let us think of what we were, and what we are, and ground our hopes on that of what we shall be hereafter. "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is the LORD from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we *have* borne the image of the earthy, we *shall* also bear the image of the Heavenly."² In the oneness of our regeneration and sanctification, the LORD JESUS CHRIST will "change our vile body that

¹ Acts xxvi. 8.

² 1 Cor. xv. 47—49.

it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body.”¹ He, as the Corn of Wheat, has fallen “into the ground and died,” and now He “abideth not alone, but beareth much fruit,” even us in His likeness, for the ingathering of His FATHER the Husbandman.

¹ Phil. iii. 21.

XVI.

THE RESTORATION.

REV. xxii. 3.

THERE SHALL BE NO MORE CURSE.

THE consummation of the Atonement is Life Everlasting. For this very end, that all we who are otherwise irrecoverably dead might be raised again to life, the At-one-Maker came down from the seat of His glory, and became what He was and is. He died, that we might live; He rose again the third day from the dead, and ascended into heaven, that He might be Forerunner to us; He sent the Holy Spirit into His Church, that men born in sin might be drawn into His living mystical Body; and that they who were made living members of Him upon earth, might in the end, live with Him everlastingly in heaven. From the fall therefore, till the end of time, ordinances and administrations, and laws of obedience,—whether in the patriarchal dispensation, or under the law of Sinai, or in the personal ministry

of CHRIST, or in the Church which He left on earth, —have all tended to this, that through Him and in Him the curse might be done away, the power of sin and death abolished, and men be restored to the blessedness of GOD's favour and presence.

If then we look at the changes which followed the decree, "Thou shalt surely die," we may learn in some measure what that restoration will be which must ensue when "There shall be no more curse."

I. First, that likeness of unlimited perfection was lost which had marked the excellence of man's nature beyond all other earthly creatures. "The Image of GOD" is indeed a mystery ; what it *fully* includes we cannot tell, yet we must needs believe such general notions as this concerning it, that it consisted of a glory, power, and beauty only a "little lower" than that of the holy angels, and which fitted men, as angels, to dwell in the all-glorious presence of their Maker. Now, since this Image of perfection must have been corrupted and in a great measure lost by the Fall, the Restoration of it will be one chief work of that New Creation when the justified "shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their FATHER," and "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." And in one sense this work has begun upon us as soon as we come into the world ; for the life which we now live in the flesh is the beginning of the life which will have no end. GOD bestows

upon us the gift of life as an inalienable possession ; and since He so gives it that we cannot part from it if we would, He provides that it may be a blessing to us, and not a curse. Some speak as if it were better to die than to live ;¹ and better never to have been, than to come into life to die ; but if it could be so said with truth of any, it cannot of those in whom are sown the seeds of Life Everlasting. For the unregenerate man death may seem better than life, but, "If any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature : old things are passed away, behold all things are become new ;"² and it is not better never to have been, than to have come into the world that we may be regenerated into that kingdom wherein God will, in His own good time, bring about the height, perfection, and glory of the life here begun. The clear vision of our privileges in CHRIST will teach us, that whatever may be the evils and sorrows incident to the present life, it is the gate of the New Creation to Life Everlasting, and only those can be accounted real evils which keep us from the inheritance of our calling.

Yet though the Image of the Fall has been washed away in the "new creature," and so the restoration of the Image of God begun ; the perfection of spiritual beauty and glory can only then be

¹ Eccles. iv. 2, 3 ; Ecclus. xli. 2 ; 2 Esdras vii. 46.

² 2 Cor. v. 17.

wrought, when we have again, in the resurrection of the body, passed beneath His Almighty hand, Who at the first created us in sinless beauty and majesty from the dust of the ground. Then indeed the "former things" of a fallen nature will "have passed away," and "the body of this death" in which we have borne the image of the earthy, shall be transfigured into the image of the Heavenly, even of the glorified Body of the At-one-Maker. Our birth into the first Adam was "of the earth earthy," and has brought us his likeness, death, and corruptibility; our birth into the second Adam has brought us Life Everlasting, the immortality of the New Creation. How great a change: from a fainting, weary, sinful, spent, and burdened tabernacle, to that "house not made with hands," the "flesh" in which we shall "see God," "eternal in the heavens."

But the Fall has left its deepest marks upon the souls of men, and to these also God in His mercy will give back the beauty of His Image. Such a restoration reaches up to the very pinnacle of holiness, realizing in full the law of CHRIST, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your FATHER Which is in heaven is perfect."¹ And such a Restoration in its fulness must needs belong to a state different from that in which we now are; for who even dares to speak or think of any saint attaining here such per-

¹ S. Matt. v. 48.

fection in his degree, as the FATHER in heaven has in His? But in the Life Everlasting this exalted standard seems no more than the natural condition of the saints. They have been accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead ; to be like Him Whom they shall see as He is ; and having regained that glorious likeness, they are “ the spirits,” not of just men only, but of “ just men *made perfect*.” They are justified by Him Whose presence began their new life in an earthly regeneration, and He will go on to make it perfect in that of His unchanging kingdom.

And thus, while we call the glorification of the body a New Creation, we speak of the soul’s final renovation as a making perfect ; because in the latter case there is no cessation of life, no interval of decay, no building up again of a fabric that has fallen into ruin, but a going on from strength to strength ; an extension, as we may say, to heaven, of the holiness with which God has endowed the soul on earth, a developement to its highest growth of that new-birth which was first planted as a little seed.

Now the soul being made up of *knowledge* and *will*, it is in the developement and sanctification of these that its final perfection will consist. Both these are now bound down in the bondage of the Fall, but in the Restoration they will be set free, it may be in more than the freedom of their original creation.

And as to our understanding in the present life, how true is it that "we know but in part," and "see, as through a glass, darkly." Measuring the strength of our knowledge upon material things, do not even the wisest of men tell us that every new discovery is but a new cause for chastened humility, since it teaches us afresh our own ignorance and shortsightedness? How much rather when we measure it by the length and breadth of mysteries divine; for what can we say of the most essential truths of our holy religion, but that we know them only in outline, and see them as through a veil.

In the midst of all this weakness there is however an evident continuance of that same ambition which led to the Fall, the desire to know more than God has hitherto revealed, to "be as gods, knowing good and evil;" and no doubt this aspiration after higher knowledge is a token within us of that goal to which we are going forward where we shall no longer know only in part or see darkly. This life is the childhood of our being; but when in the end of the Atonement we attain the "measure of the stature of CHRIST," the things of childhood will give place; "that which is in part shall be done away, that which is perfect is come;" a perfection of understanding wherein all other things are comprehended when it is said that we shall "know the love of God, which passeth knowledge." As the eyes of philosophers

are enabled by the added powers of science to behold myriads of stars where before they had seen only a fleecy cloud of light; so will the spiritual sight be endowed with new power to resolve the mysteries of heaven, and penetrate by intuition into the deeps of illimitable knowledge.

Neither shall there be any more curse upon the Will in the Life Everlasting. What tears have saints shed over the stubbornness of their wills? What discipline have they exercised upon themselves to bring them into subjection? How have they gone on praying year after year, making this the whole burden of their supplication, that God would bring their wills into harmony with His. And yet if their discipline relaxed, or their watching ceased for a moment, or their prayers grew less fervent, these same wills would break forth as an unchained leviathan which nothing can tame, maddened with evil dispositions, and roaming in the wide ocean of sin. Now when the restoration of God's Image is completed in the soul, as the gates of knowledge will be thrown open, so those of the will shall be closed up for ever. There will be no longer a struggle of the desires of man against the Will of God; but all lower wills being taken up and absorbed into His, obedience will be unresisting, and love unfettered. Then will be fulfilled that prayer which the Church has been lifting up, hour by hour through so many long ages,

that the Will of GOD may be as perfectly her guide, as it is the law of the holy angels.

II. Again, when "there shall be no more curse," everything external to us, as well as within us, will be so transfigured that no mark of GOD's anger shall rest upon it. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened," but in the end of the Atonement we shall go "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD." So with all that is beneath and around us. "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now," because the CREATOR of all said to man, "Cursed shall the ground be for thy sake." But when "there shall be no more curse," there will be a "new heaven and a new earth," from which every token of sin and sorrow shall have passed away. And as the redeemed man will be more glorious than the unfallen Adam, so will the courts of the New Jerusalem exceed the beauty of Eden. All shall be peace. Pain, toil, and want; the sweat of the brow, and the hazard of life, can have no place in the land where there is no curse. They who dwell there shall neither hunger nor thirst any more; neither shall they sorrow for cold and nakedness; for the sun with its changing seasons shall give place to the eternal uncreated light, the "river of the water of life" shall flow on for evermore, and the tree of life "bearing twelve manner of fruits," "shall yield her

fruit," and that without failing. So everything that betokens a fallen state will be removed ; and all that makes life irksome changed for peace and rest. As the Image of God will be restored in the glorified bodies of the saints ; so will be restored the glory of that first Creation of which "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Thus will the blessedness of the Life Everlasting consist in the restoration of ourselves, soul and body, and of all that is external to us, so far as it is worthy of the regeneration, to a condition as holy and glorious as they had before the Fall. As through the sin of the natural father from whom we all derive our being, the tree of life was taken away, and the Image of God marred in us ; so through the Atonement in the second Adam, of Whom we are rebegotten, we are sealed afresh in the glorious Image : and the tree of life, bearing now, not one, but "twelve manner of fruits, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations," is once more within our reach. Our renovated condition will be, at the least, as if sin and death had never gained any power over us.

Yet all this does but mark out, as it were, the outer circle of the courts of heaven, the approach to the presence chamber of the King in His beauty. "There shall be no more curse." Instead of weakness, and temptation, and the prolonged pouring out of death, there shall be safety, peace, and life ever-

lasting. But this is not all the joy of saints in the new Jerusalem; "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face."¹

"They shall see His face!" Let us think of this reverently, and remember the command given at the burning bush, "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Remember that the whole mystery of CHRIST, whether on earth or in heaven, is a revelation of His Presence. He Who was "the brightness of His FATHER's glory, and the express Image of His Person," revealed Himself among men in a form of humiliation, and they saw the face of the Son of Man. Yet a little while, and the world saw Him no more, but still He manifests in His Church the Presence which He denies to the world; and His people, even to ourselves, behold Him by faith, in His ordinances, and especially in His sacraments. Again, He is doubtless seen by those who have departed this life to be with Him in Paradise. And last of all, when the great and terrible day of His judgment shall come, there will be such a revelation of His Person, that not only His Disciples and His Church shall behold, but the whole world of living men from the beginning to the end of time—"every eye shall see Him."

¹ Rev. xxii. 3, 4.

But in all these manifestations by faith and sight, what is it that is revealed to us? It is the human form which GOD the SON took to Himself that He might work the Atonement between GOD and man. It is the Form of the SON. But "when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the SON also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD may be all in all."¹ "Now we see not yet all things put under Him, but we see JESUS,"² that is, the Manhood of the SON of GOD. Is it this Form, glorious Form as It is, that the righteous will behold when the Atonement shall be at an end, and the SON have given up the kingdom to the FATHER? Is there not yet that which "eye hath not seen," even the Face of Him on Whom unrestored manhood could not look and live? Shall the form of the blessed JESUS, the At-one-maker, and the Judge be all? Shall there not be the Presence in visible Majesty of the ever glorious and holy Three in One? "The city" shall have "no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of GOD" shall "lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it."³ "There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the LORD GOD giveth them light."⁴

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 28.² Heb. ii. 8, 9.³ Rev. xxi. 23, 24.⁴ Rev. xxii. 5.

O glorious vision of the Light unveiled; what unutterable joys are contained in these words, "They shall see His face." And yet is the vision prepared for us, if we will; already are we in the road which leads onward to it; we have but to go forward, and it shall be ours at last in all reality and fulness, for "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."¹ Blessed are we, if being already justified by the Blood of the Atonement, we walk along the path of this life in the Light of the Sun of Righteousness. In the day when the light of the sun shall be needed no more, we shall behold the perfect Dayspring. The life that is in us now is by faith in the Light of JESUS' Presence; hereafter the LORD GOD shall be our Light, and we shall "see His face" in the Life Everlasting.

¹ Prov. iv. 18.

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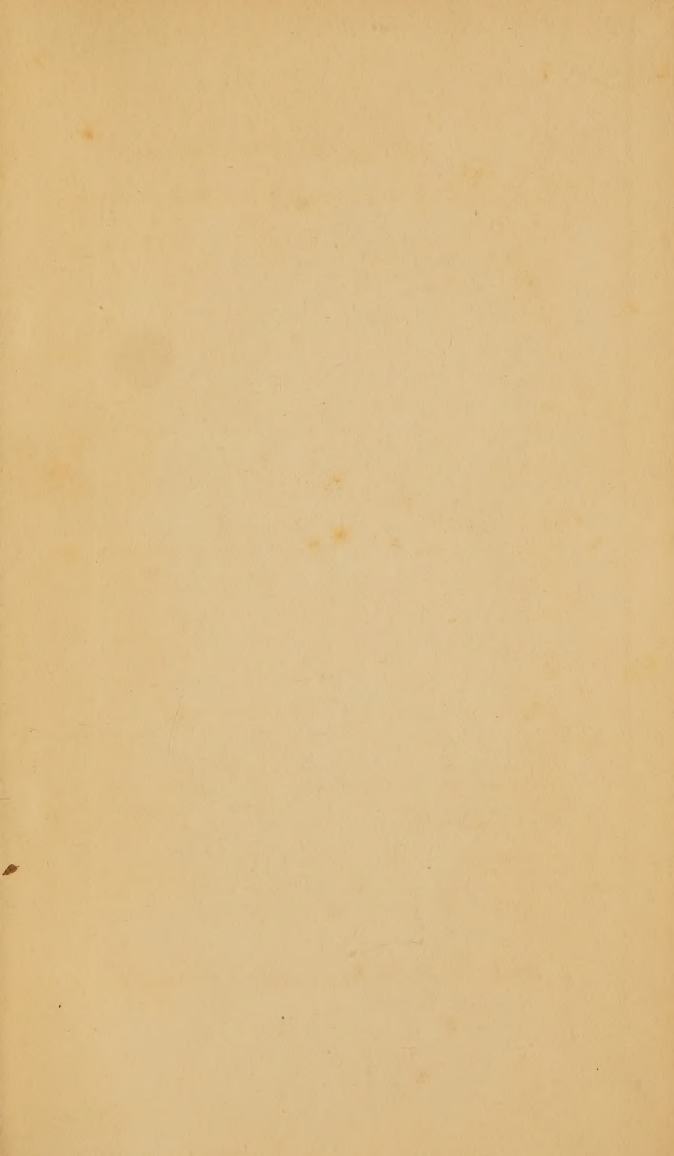
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